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A

COLLECTION

OF

LETTERS,

ON

SACRED SUBJECTS.

COLOS. iii. 17.

Whatsoever ye do in Word or Deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

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Margaret Bentz

LETTERS

ON

SACRED SUBJECTS

Margaret Bentz

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Collection was published several Years ago in SHEFFIELD, and universally well received, but as it is little known in IRELAND, the Editor hopes it will prove acceptable to all Lovers of *pure and undefiled Religion.* This Collection is enriched with several selected from the Arminian Magazine, and other publications.

THE PREFACE. TO THE FORMER EDITION.

I. IT will be easily discerned by the reader of this collection, that the various Authors, however obscure in their life and reputation, have acquired a thorough acquaintance with the ways of God, and are deeply experienced in his work. The letters themselves will sufficiently evince the truth of this. For they are evidently the productions, not of such as are mere Novices in true, vital religion, but of such rather as have penetrated into the "Interiora Regni," the hidden mysteries of the kingdom of grace. By this it will appear plain, that they will be received and understood by those only, who are endued with somewhat of the like knowledge and experience; or are really desirous so to be. And to them, little doubt can be made, but they will be more acceptable, than perhaps any thing of this kind, which has been before presented to the world. The reason for this opinion is obvious: because, I do not know, that there is any volume of letters besides, on the same subject, wrote by so many different hands, coming from persons so different in their genius, disposition, and understanding;

ing; and consequently displaying the glorious works of God in so different, yet clear, and striking a light. What can we imagine therefore, more entertaining, more profitable, or more edifying?

2. It has been the general opinion of men wise and learned, that a collection of polite letters, wrote by persons of taste and abilities, are a valuable treasure: because in them we may discover, commonly at least, more of the temper and the whole turn of mind of the writer, than in any other compositions whatever. How extremely valuable then, in the esteem of such as have received the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the wisdom that comes down from above, will be, we may reasonably suppose, a collection of spiritual letters, clearly setting forth, and thereby forcibly recommending the power of godliness? Free justification through faith in a Redeemer's blood, and that work of God which is afterwards carried on in the believing soul, against many and various temptations, under the conduct, and by the operation of the spirit, are the interesting subjects of these epistles. And the latter often so expressed by some of these writers, in the account they give of their experience, as may possible be found a most lively comment upon some remarkable deep and weighty passages of scripture. Particularly such as these: *The God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the*

power

power of the Holy Ghoſt.—That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, may give unto you the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your underſtanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints, and what is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.—For this cauſe I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthened with might, by his ſpirit in the inner man; that Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all ſaints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height; and to know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulneſs of God.—And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be ſincere, and without offence, till the day of Chriſt; being filled with all the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt, unto the glory and praiſe of God. And if we may be allowed to conſider them in this light, which after a peruſal, I believe, will not be thought unreaſonable, they muſt ſurely be unſpeakably precious to thoſe who are lovers of the word of God.

3. But

3. But least any one should be induced to think, by what has been said, that they are exalted beyond the desert of mere human compositions, which will always be liable to imperfections, it may be needful to observe, that I would not attempt to acquit them of many inelegancies and inaccuracies of expression, or even of some mistakes and errors. The candid reader, therefore, is desired, if he finds any thing not agreeable to his judgment, to remember they are wrote by men: and by men who make no pretensions to infallible inspiration. But at the same time he is likewise desired impartially to weigh the substance, and, for the sake of his own profit, to give the just esteem to what is truly valuable. This he may surely be persuaded to do, notwithstanding some parts may not exactly concur with his sentiments. For moderation and christian love towards those, who differ from us in their opinions, ought carefully to be cultivated in all serious minds; the contrary having been the occasion of many very apparent evils.

4. For my own part, I take most peculiar delight in those writings, which exalt to the utmost Christ my great Redeemer, his infinitely meritorious life, passion, and death, and the exceeding great efficacy of the sanctifying influence of his spirit. Wherefore those books, or sermons, or conversations, which, however strongly they may enforce the inward work

of

of God in the soul, yet speak but sparingly or slightly of Christ's adorable rich merits, to me seem to diminish their lustre, lose their strength, and become far less useful. Nor can it be esteemed, on the other hand, suitable to the christian plan, under a pretence of extolling the sufferings and atonement of a crucified Saviour, to depreciate, by omitting to inculcate, the sanctifying work of his spirit. We can never sufficiently admire, or expatiate upon the former; but then we ought likewise as largely and fully to treat of the latter. May it please God, therefore, to give unto all those, whom he has visited with his grace, "A sound judgment in all things pertaining to his kingdom"! May he also prosper with his blessing, this little work, that it may be to the glory of his name, and the happy establishment of many christians in knowledge, grace, and experience!

A

A

COLLECTION

OF

LETTERS.

LETTER I.

[*From Mr. Charles Perronet.*]

On Communion with the Father and the Son.

THE anſwer I gave you before was too concise for the importance of the ſubject. It is worthy of all our thoughts, demands all our time, and ſhould be the whole purſuit of life, *To know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, is eternal life.* He that redeemed us, hath purchaſed the moſt perfect grace for all that believe: and with every other gift beſtows *himſelf.*

Gifts, Graces, Manifeſtations, are ſmall things without God dwelling in us, and making all we receive to center in himſelf. The image of God is too divine for leſs than God to ſatisfy its wants, or employ its large capacities. Our fall is too great to be repaired by any thing ſhort of indwelling

Deity. Nothing can reſtore the ſoul, but Jeſus deſcending as Lord of the ſoul, and actuating the graces he beſtows.

Our Creation was the act of *three* Divine Perſons in *one* undivided Jehovah. So is our Redemption: each undertakes a particular part; each beſtows his gifts, and vouchſafes diſtinct manifeſtations of the Godhead. Man had at firſt free admiſſion to God; yet not without a Mediator of Acceſs. All we receive now, is through a Mediator of Atonement. Sin ſeparated from God: only by a Mediator could favour be reſtored. There is no Mediator without equality: Reſtoration implies that equality: and equality proves the poſſibility of reſtoration. We are ſent to the Lord Jeſus: the Father gives us to the Son. Thus we draw nigh to God through Jeſus Chriſt. The Son reveals the Father: thus we know God, enjoy his favour, have free acceſs, and become One in the beginning. The whole is by the Father giving the Son to us, and bringing us to the Son. Jeſus tranſacts all with God. And whatever he did on earth, or doth in heaven, is brought into the ſoul; we die, riſe, live with him, and his Spirit prays in us.

The ſame will it be in Glory. But we are firſt with Chriſt in Paradiſe. Then the Son preſents us to the throne of his Father, where we ſhall behold his face for ever.

Our fellowſhip is with the Father and his Son Jeſus Chriſt. We equally adore the Eternal Spirit; apply to him, with the Father and Son, for Grace, and receive peculiar manifeſtations from him. He bleſſes, ſanctifies, and reveals himſelf, in them that come unto God through Jeſus Chriſt.

Each

Each Divine Person vouchsafes to bear a peculiar relation to us, assumes a peculiar character, and acts a distinct part in our redemption. God is undivided in his Essence, but distinct in Personality: and what in one part of Scripture is ascribed to the undivided Godhead, is in other parts ascribed separately to each person. The Son sends forth *Grace*, which implies the whole of our Redemption, Pardon, and Holiness; all *purchased favour*. The Father sheds abroad his *Love*, opposite to the *wrath* which is due to disobedience. The Spirit vouchsafes *Communion*, which through his agency we receive with the Father and the Son. And this Communion is opposed to *Separation* from God.

So in future Glory, God is eternally One; but each Person will communicate a peculiar part of our joy. Yet, whether in this or the world to come, whatever is the act of one, is the act of the whole Trinity. *The Son can do nothing of himself*, because of his perfect unity with the Father: and the Father and Spirit do whatever the Son doth, because of an undivided essence.

Under the Old Covenant, God appeared distant and more severe: in the New, he draws nigh, and is more benign. In the Old, God is most spoken of: in the New, Christ. In the former dispensation, Christ is peculiarly considered as a *Governor*: in the latter, as an *Advocate* and *Atonement*. This the apostle has an eye to, when he ranges the *General Assembly*. First, and remotest from God, are the *myriads of Angels*; then the *Church of the first-born*, the Old Testament saints, who are nearer. These he places before God as a *Judge*: last, *the spirits of just men made perfect*, by *the bringing in of a better hope*, the Gospel-dispensation. These he gives to Jesus,

as a Saviour, Mediator, and Sacrifice. Thus the order of the united hoſt is preſerved, and the Climax raiſed as high as it can go, God dying to redeem!

It is undeniable, there is One ſpoken of in the Old and New Teſtament, called JEHOVAH OF SABBAOTH; and all that the moſt High God is or doth is aſcribed to him. It is certain, he is deſcribed as acting ſubordinately, and at the will of another. And it is as certain, there can be but One JEHOVAH, and that JEHOVAH can be no leſs than himſelf. Infinity admits of no Degrees or Multiplicity. It is One: it is Equality: the leaſt inferiority makes the diſtance Infinite. *But he that aſcended, firſt deſcended.* He *deſcended into the lower parts of the earth* (a term for human conception) he *came down from heaven:* yet, as God, *he was in heaven* while on earth. He *came not to do his own will.* But the Divine Nature could do no other will: nor be *ſent*; nor *ſerve*; nor be other than equal, undivided Jehovah. Therefore, the nature ſpoken of is the created exiſtence of him who is JEHOVAH, *the beginning of the creation of God*; *by whom God created all things*; who *appeared to the fathers*; *led Iſrael through the wilderneſs*; was *manifeſted in the fleſh*, died, aſcended, and will judge the world.

When I firſt ſought the Lord, I found no intercourſe open with him, though his Spirit daily changed my heart, and drew me from all outward things, to ſeek my all in Uncreated Good. The firſt ſix months I was refreſhed by various influences of grace, which drew me after heavenly things, but diſcovered nothing of him from whom they came. I was all deſire, all fervour; and, on the ſtretch for divine communications, as one dead to all below. Outward things could not allure me,

me, because I had renounced them, and devoted myself to the Love of Christ But it was not till after much joy and sorrow, that I knew the mighty ALL, for whose sake all was and is, the first, eternal spring of all things, in whom they begin and end.

After this, I was three months in deep distress, through the loss of those meltings of heart, of that light and joy, and power to approach God in prayer. Then Christ restored the graces I had possessed with double increase, and the revelation of *himself*. The grace I received came now with Jesus Christ himself in so clear a manifestation, that from what I daily experienced, I could have preached him to all the world. If I had never heard the name of Christ, I could have declared him to be God and Man, and the Mediator between both.

Now I sought Grace; but Jesus above Grace, and all that could be imparted. Whatever help or strength I obtained, it seemed a small thing if he came not with what he bestowed. The Son of God was now my refuge from every storm; my friend, my hiding-place on all occasions. I talked with him; he seemed to look upon me with precious smiles; became my delightful abode; gave me promises, and made all my existence glory in himself, fixing all my desires upon his Love, and the glorious display of his own person. I could relish only Jesus: to have been a moment with him, I would have given up all besides. I was so engaged with Christ, that the thought how he had been despised while on earth, drowned my eyes in tears: and the thought, that now he possessed all fulness, so satisfied my largest desires, that I had no choice, whether to exist or not: whatever was *myself*, was no more. It seemed to

make no part of my Happineſs. All centered in Jeſus, and him alone.

Before I experienced this, I had never known that Prayer was offered up *to Chriſt*, but only *in his name*. But now all my cry was to him, as he was the only perſon of the Godhead I beheld. At firſt he diſcovered himſelf as the Holy Lord, and Ruler over his Redeemed: then as a Father of his adopted Children, a friend, an intimate and condeſcending Companion: laſt of all, as the Spouſe of his Church, of all Believers; which character exceeded every other. Every manifeſtation more abundantly knit my heart to himſelf, his word, and commandments. I could truly ſay, *How dear are thy counſels to me, O God! All my ſtudy is in thy commandments.*

The Scripture diſplays the relation God ſtands in to his people, in a multitude of ſacred characters. Some of theſe relate to this world; ſome to the other: but all prove diverſity of experience; and that *one ſtar differeth from another*, both in grace and glory.

Juſt after my uniting with the Methodiſts, the Father was revealed to me; and ſoon after, the whole Trinity: I beheld the diſtinct Perſons of the Godhead; and worſhipped *one* undivided Jehovah, and each perſon ſeparately. After this, I often had equal intercourſe with Chriſt and with the Father: afterward, with the Spirit alſo. But after four years, my uſual Communion was with Chriſt only: though at times, with the Father likewiſe; and not wholly without the Spirit. Of late I have found the ſame acceſs to the Triune God. When I approach Jeſus, the Father and Spirit commune with me; but not in the degree as before. Whatever I receive now, centers in taking leave of Earth, and haſting to another place. I am as one

that

that is no more. I ſtand and look back on what God has done; his calls, helps, mercies, deliverances; and adore and devote myſelf with new ardour.

In ſpeaking of theſe things, it is hard to find utterance. And human weakneſs, intermixing much of Imagination, cauſes the Truth to be rejected. If it be aſked, "In what manner I beheld the triune God?" I anſwer, It is above all deſcription: it differs ſo much from what is human. Who can deſcribe Light, ſo as to make him underſtand that has never ſeen it? And he that hath thus ſeen God, can no more deſcribe what he has ſeen, than he that hath not. In two of theſe Divine Interviews, the Father ſpake, while I was in agony of prayer for perfect Conformity to himſelf; twice more, when I was in the depth of ſorrow; and each time, in ſcripture words.

The Manifeſtations to the Patriarchs were Outward, and therefore admitted of being deſcribed. But what I relate was not Outward: it was not any External Viſion: it was not what we commonly call Faith: it was not an Impreſſion upon my mind, but different from all. While the Soul is under the power of Faith, the perſon of Chriſt is often preſented to the imagination. But what I ſpeak was not this; rather I ſuppoſe, it was a ſimilitude of what is ſeen in Eternity. But ſtill only a ſimilitude: for while we are in the body, all the operations of God's Spirit are wrought upon our body and ſpirit, inſeparably conjoined. We are now compoſed of a material and immaterial part: and nothing can poſſibly act upon one, without affecting both. But by and by we ſhall be, for a ſeaſon, pure Spirit: afterwards, joined to a ſpiritual Body, ſo totally different from this corruptible body, that what we then perceive

perceive will be different from all we perceive now.

It may be aſked, " Was the Appearance glorious ?" It was all divine: it was Glory, I had no conception of: it was God. The firſt time the Glory of him I ſaw, reached even to me: I was overwhelmed with it, body and ſoul, penetrated through with the rays of Deity.

" But was it light ?" It was not brightneſs, more than darkneſs. Our common acceptation of Glory above, is that of ſomething *glittering*, and ſomething that is *our own*. But here are two miſtakes: 1. We do not conſider the difference between this and the other world. To us, That is excellent which is bright and ſhining: but what is excellent to them, is of a kind, which hitherto we have no conception of. 2. We imagine Glory to be ſomething that is *our own*; whereas it is all things centering in God. Separate from him, there is nothing glorious: ſpotleſs Souls would loath themſelves, and their grace and glory, could it be poſſeſſed out of God. But there he is the firſt and the laſt, the mighty All. All things are *by* him, and all things are *to* him; flowing back to their firſt riſe, and reſting in him as their eternal Center. There the clamour of ſelf-ſeeking and ſelf-complacency ceaſes, or it would not be Heaven. We only know, That God is: and he, being what he is, is our All.

In conſequence of this, I could never reſt in Grace abſent from God. After I had beheld him, nothing but his preſence could ſuffice. This wrought in me much thankfulneſs, that the darkneſs of the Moſaic Diſpenſation is paſt; that the true light ſhines on us, and we are admitted within the veil, to ſee what many prophets and righteous men could not. The feeble now exceed in communion

munion with God, the chief under the old covenant: and the leaſt in the Goſpel State enjoy more of the Divine Nature, than the greateſt before Chriſt came. It alſo cauſed me to give up all thoughts of an Heaven, that was not God himſelf above all things, and all things in him: his preſence making the bleſſedneſs of the outward Manſion prepared for us.

Though *it doth not appear what we ſhall be*, yet the things of earth are patterns of things above. Whatever is now, will be hereafter, only exiſting in a different mode. And that which we were in our firſt creation, the ſame will remain for ever. Man is compounded of Body and Soul; and will be ſo to eternity. He has now many faculties and capacities; and ſo he will have hereafter. And this diverſity of powers, requires diverſity of employment. The outward man was formed for the outward things, which God diſplayed in the Creation. But all bleſſedneſs lies in union with his Spirit: here is the riſe and center of all Enjoyment, the Channel through which all deſcends, and what alone conſtitutes Heaven. Whether on Earth or in Heaven, we derive nothing from God ſeparate from himſelf; but by being one Spirit with him, we receive the Gift through union with the Giver.

Our Underſtanding riſes higher than the Senſes, contemplating the Works and the Attributes of God. But the ſoul has capacities higher than this; Capacities of admitting an immediate intercourſe with God. Here, indeed, human language fails. But, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, this Part of the Soul cannot ſtoop to any thing leſs than Union with God. The Underſtanding, meantime, can riſe no higher, than to contemplate his perfections: and the Senſes can riſe no higher than to

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be employed in remote, indirect participations of God, through those outward things which are so many vehicles to convey the Knowledge of God, by the manifestation of his power, wisdom, and goodness in these his lowest works.

Let it not be conceived from any thing which has been said, That the soul possesses God's incommunicable Essence, or enters into that Union, by which the Three are One Jehovah: or that through the grace of the Lord Jesus, we partake of the Divine Nature in the same manner that God exists in himself. The former is the error of *Jacob Behmen*, and Mr. *Law*; the latter of such spiritual writers as *Arndt*. All that God is, is incommunicable and incomprehensible. Therefore, we cannot partake of the least degree: no, nor conceive what it is. Only it is something divine, which bears a correspondence with the perfection of the divine nature. And our Redemption is a restoration by being united to Christ, not as the Father and Son are united, but as branches in a vine.

But as we were made for externals as well as internals, and for intercourse with creatures as well as the Creator, one alone does not complete our Happiness, without both: only this difference: Immediate participation with God exceeds what is received through the medium of creatures; and himself dwelling in us is more than all outward displays of his Divinity.

When Adam was formed, it was in the likeness of God. First, A divine resemblance of God in his Natural and Moral Perfections. His similitude in the Natural, is the ground of it in his Moral Perfections. Whatever Wisdom and Power is in God, we have something correspondent therewith in ourselves Again: as Truth, Justice, and Mercy,

Mercy, are in God, ſo there is the ſimilitude of them in us. What God really is, we have no direct perception of, and can receive no real communication of. But by looking into ourſelves, we know the ſame muſt be in God, only in a manner ſuitable to his infinite nature, and infinitely differing from ourſelves, in kind as well as in degree.

Secondly, The Divine Image we were formed in, was the nature of the created exiſtence of Chriſt; as he is *the beginning of the creation of God.* We are not of the nature of Angels; but of Chriſt in his finite exiſtence. This made the Church capable of being his Spouſe. And this relation ſeems to be a cauſe, why we were redeemed. The ſacred nearneſs to himſelf made it worthy of Chriſt to ſuffer for us.

This image conſiſted, thirdly, in man's being the Vice-God, or head of the Creation. *Let them have dominion,* ſaid God, *over all the Earth.*

Paradiſe was an early reſemblance of the glorious place of God's abode. Adam took poſſeſſion of it, and was ſet to *dreſs and keep the Garden.* But as Paradiſe muſt have been a large place, and as God's Vicegerent muſt have had no employ unfit for a divine ſtation, his office muſt have promoted, not hindered the deſign, of his being created in the likeneſs of God. To *keep the garden* was to preſerve it in the order wherein God had planted it. To have made this the *work of his hands,* would have been ſinking him into earth: ſomething like the toil allotted to him, after his tranſgreſſion. Neither could the hands of one man have dreſſed ſuch a garden: nor does it ſeem to have been a work, that hands could have any part in.

Adam was endued with intuitive Diſcernment. Reaſon was beneath him, and was the Serpent's prerogative;

prerogative ; bearing the same proportion to Adam's Knowledge, as groping in the dark does to walking in the clear light. By his Authority he gave names to all Creatures, and, by his intuitive Discernment, he suited the name to something peculiar in the nature of each.

The Creation seems to be hieroglyphical, pourtraying the Creator. All that which affected the outward senses, was emblematic of some attribute of God, and a vehicle to convey a delightful communication of it : so that through the creatures the Creator was conveyed, and man made to center in God.

His supreme Joy consisted in direct intercourse with God : the next, in contemplating his Excellencies : the lowest, in what he beheld of the outward manifestation of God, or tasted in the hieroglyphic Garden in converse with Eve, and exercising his office of ruling over the Creation. These completed his joy, and were the type of what he was to enjoy more perfectly above.

Hereafter the Soul is to enjoy the fulness of God, and to dwell in his immediate presence, having abilities to contemplate his excellencies, and by means of the Resurrection-body, to enjoy the local Heaven, and the fellowship of the Saints. These conjointly will complete the Joy, which no one of them alone would do.

What the Resurrection-body is, and what its capacities are, we know not. But we know its powers will be amazing : and these employments equal and suitable to them. And both the Body and all its offices, are subservient to the Soul's receiving its full happiness.

The House not made with hands is all divine. The City *has the glory of God, and her light is like a jasper stone, clear as chrystal. The wall is of jasper,*

jaſper, the city of pure gold. The gates have angels for ever and ever attending on the favoured inhabitants: and each is ſaid to be made of one pearl, to ſhew that the work was beyond eſtimation. God and the Lamb dwell in the city, and are the light and temple thereof. The *light* and *walls* are jaſper, to which he that ſitteth on the throne is compared. The light of the city enters not in, but flows out on thoſe that are not holy enough to enter. Nevertheleſs, they walk in the light of it, as the inhabitants of its ſuburbs.

The ſame may be ſaid of Grace as of glory. Many are ſo engaged with outward things, that though they are ſpiritually employed, yet their dwelling is not within the City, but in the diſtant light of it. I long for better things for *you:* and wiſh you to be engaged in ſecuring to yourſelf a place, where God and the Lamb dwell for ever!

In the internal Heaven is God the Spirit, under the emblem of *pure water*, termed *a river*, for its abundance, *proceeding out of the throne.* The experiences of Grace below, are from the Father and the Son. And the enjoyment of glory will be *from God and the Lamb, and from the throne.* A throne is the higheſt glory of kings: and to reign is the higheſt office, and the moſt active part of kingly greatneſs. This we ſhall poſſeſs with Jeſus, as Co-heirs of his kingdom. For, as one experience of Grace, ſo does one manifeſtation of glory differ from one another. And that which *proceeds from the throne*, is the higheſt that is communicable. This is from the Father and the Son, in glorious, eternal fellowſhip, through the ſpirit of *one undivided Jehovah. There is no curſe*, but all is now as if God had never been offended: no

 ſin,

ſin, ſorrow, grave; but the beatific viſion, and immediate acceſs to it.

The throne of God and the Lamb is in the city. So the *place* out of which the living waters iſſue, is itſelf their abode. *They ſee his face*; which implies acceſs, and a nature capable of knowledge, fellowſhip, and union, with him we behold. *His name is on their foreheads*; his nature in their eſſence, and appearing in their countenance. On this is founded the poſſeſſion of all they enjoy.

In our ſtate of probation, God was our center: yet not ſo fully, but there were appetites as well as capacities for other things. In heaven, he is ſo our center, that there remains no appetite, no capacity for any thing but God; therefore, no poſſibility of falling: not that the place makes us immutable, neither our holineſs: but when God engages his omnipotence on our behalf, that is our immutability.

Many are the hinderances of our Communion, at leaſt of our full Communion with the Father and the Son: unobſerved Sloth, ſecret Unfaithfulneſs to the grace we have received: not perhaps doing what God forbids, but omitting to do what he requires. Hereby a dying inſenſibility ſteals upon us, and our garment is deſtroyed before we find it is hurt. It is hurt by our not preſſing near, but being content to live at a diſtance from God: by our ceaſing to watch; or to ſtrive by our thruſting away the croſs, or neglecting to bring forth fruit meet for repentance. If we fall, we do not riſe inſtantly, and fly to be reconciled to the Son. When *his wrath is kindled but a little*, then we might draw near; but we keep off, till our heart is hardened.

Some loſe all their Communion with God at once; but moſt by ſlow degrees. They do not add

add the graces of the Gospel to Faith, and so gradually lose their spiritual sight, forgetting that the design of Grace is to purify nature, and that all is vanity but the Love of Jesus. Hence they indulge themselves in the common things of life, as food and dress. They allow themselves all they like, and only sacrifice the offals to God. Can these retain Communion with him? How few will make themselves poor with Christ, and share poverty with his members? So God cannot deal bountifully with them, because they are straitened in their own bowels.

Other Hinderances are: We do not humble ourselves as little children. We do not bear, yea, in a sense, submit to the froward, giving place unto wrath. We do not study to improve by the daily cross: we do not see the need and the use of it.

We do not behave to those under us with proper mildness, and as considering the greatest among us is to be the least. We do not see the good of being of no reputation, of being despised and rejected of men. Nay, perhaps there is a grosser hinderance. We are not exactly temperate. Even in the advanced stages of grace, this may be the case. When nature is decayed by age or trials, then we endeavour to repair it by Drink. Nay, let Christ be our Cordial. Be content with him and let him do what seemeth him good.

In the beginning of my Conversion, I was much led by divine impressions in sleep. Some warned me of temptation or sin; some of approaching affliction: others quickened me in the way, or comforted me through hope of seeing the promises fulfilled. When my experience was least, I had most of these; but they were never wholly withdrawn.

I seemed in my sleep to be often with Christ. I carried him an infant in my arms. I heard him speak. I walked with him, and saw him work Miracles. I helped to support him in his Agony: saw him crucified, and was crucified with him. I saw the approaches of the Last Day, and waited the trumpet's sound. Another time we all stood before Jesus. I cried in an agony to be made fit. I was made so, and rejoiced.

In September 1761, I returned from the West to *Brentford*. One for whom I had been sorrowing for years, had greatly sinned in that place; and I knew it not. I dreamed, and saw a glorious Building. None might enter into it that were not holy. At my first going in, I saw many looking one way, and attending to one thing. I looked the same way, and saw our Lord surrounded by a smaller company. I went near; but there was a partition that incircled them, and none might go in that had not on white robes. Christ Jesus was speaking. I got near him, and asked, "Where I was to be?" He pointed near to his feet. Immediately a door opened, and a white robe covered me. I went in, and fell at his feet; and, in an agony of Prayer for that man, awoke.

Now seek ye the Lord! And all ye that love him, see that ye hate the thing that is evil. All that have communion with him, follow righteousness: ye that are Jesus's sheep, hear his voice! He calls you to die with him, to rise, and live for ever! O, let us devote Body and Soul to him! And let us part from all that is unlike the Resurrection-life of both the outward and inward man! Be willing to suffer, that ye may reign; and patiently overcome, that ye *may inherit all things*.

CHARLES PERRONET.

Shoreham, May 1772.

LET-

LETTER II.

[The Rev. Mr. Fletcher to the Rev. Mr. Wesley, asking Advice concerning his entering into Holy Orders.]

Rev. Sir, *Nov.* 24, 1756.

AS I look on you as my spiritual Guide, and cannot doubt of your patience to hear, and your experience to answer a serious question proposed by any of your people, I freely lay my case before you. Since the first time I began to feel the Love of God shed abroad in my heart, which was, I think, when seven years of age, I resolved to give myself up to Him and the service of his Church if ever I was fit for it; but the corruption which is in the world, and that which was in my heart, soon weakened, if not erased those first characters that Grace had wrote upon my heart: however, I went through my studies with a design of going into Orders, but afterwards upon serious reflections, feeling I was unequal for so great a burden, and disgusted by the necessity I should be under to subscribe to the doctrine of Predestination, I yielded to the desire of my friends who would have me go into the army; but just before I quite engaged into a military employment I met with such disappointments as occasioned my coming to England. Here I was called outwardly three times to go into Orders, but upon praying to God that if those Calls were not from Him they might come to nothing: something always blasted

the designs of my friends, in which I have often admired the goodness of God, who has so many times hindered me from rushing into that important employment as a horse does into the battle: but I never was more thankful for this favour than since I heard the Gospel preached in its purity. Before I had been afraid, but then I trembled to meddle with Holy Things, and resolved to work out my salvation privately, without engaging into a way of life which required so much more grace and gifts than I was conscious to have: but yet from time to time I felt warm and strong desires to cast myself and all my inability upon the Lord, if I should be called any more, as knowing that he could help me and show his strength in my weakness; and from time to time those desires were encreased by some little success that attended my exhortations and letters to my friends.

I think it necessary to let you know, Sir, that my Master often desired me to take Orders, and said that he would soon help me to a Living; to which I coldly answered I was not fit, and that besides I did not know how to get a title. The thing was in that state when about six weeks ago a Gentleman I hardly knew, offered me a Living which in all probability will be vacant very soon; and a Clergyman that I had never spoke to, gave me of his own accord, the title of Curate to one of his Livings. Now, Sir, the question which I beg you to decide is, whether I must and can make use of that title to try to go into Orders. For as for the Living, were it vacant, I have no mind to it, because I think I could preach with more fruit in my country and in my own tongue. I am in suspence: for on the one side my heart tells me I must try, and it tells me so whenever I feel any degree of the Love of God and man: but on the other,

other, when I examine whether I am fit for it, I so plainly see my want of gifts, and especially of that soul of all the labours of a Minister of the Gospel, Love, continual, universal, flaming Love, that my confidence disappears, I accuse myself of pride, to dare to entertain the desire of supporting one day the Ark of the Lord, and I conclude that an extraordinary punishment will sooner or later overtake my rashness: as I am in both those frames successively, I must own Sir, I do not see plainly which of the two ways before me I can take with safety, and I shall be glad to be ruled by you, because I trust God will direct you in giving me the advice you think will best conduce to his glory, the only thing I would have in view in this affair: I know how precious is your time, I desire no long answer, *persist* or *forbear* will satisfy and influence

Sir,

Your unworthy Servant,

JOHN FLETCHER.

LETTER III.

[To the same.]

Rev. Sir, London, May 26, 1757.

IF I did not write to you before Mrs. Wesley had asked me, 'tis not that I wanted a remembrancer within, but rather an encourager without. There is generally upon my heart such a sense of my unworthiness, that I dare hardly open my mouth before a child of God sometimes, and think

think it is an unſpeakable honour to ſtand before one who has recovered ſomething of the image of God, or ſincerely ſeeks after it. Is it poſſible that ſuch a ſinful worm as me ſhould have the privilege to converſe with one, whoſe ſoul is beſprinkled with the blood of my Lord? The thought amazes—confounds me, and fills my eyes with tears of humble joy. Judge then at what diſtance I muſt ſee myſelf from you, if I am ſo much below the leaſt of your children; and whether a remembrancer within ſuffices to make me preſume to write to one, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear. I rejoice that you find every where an increaſe of praying ſouls. I doubt not but the prayer of the juſt has great power with God; but I cannot believe that it ſhould hinder the fulfilling of Chriſt's gracious promiſes to his Church: he muſt and will certainly come at the time appointed, for he is not ſlack as ſome men count ſlackneſs; and though he would have all come to repentance, yet he has not forgot to be true and juſt. Only he will come with more mercy, and will increaſe the light that ſhall be at evening-tide, according to his promiſe in Zach. xiv. 7. I ſhould rather think that the viſions are not yet plainly diſcloſed, and that the day and year in which the Lord will begin to make bare his arm openly, is ſtill concealed from us. I muſt ſay concerning Mr. Walſh, as he ſaid once to me, concerning God. I wiſh I could attend him every where as Eliſha attended Elias; but ſince the will of God calls me from him, I muſt ſubmit and drink the cup prepared for me. I have not ſeen him, unleſs for a few moments, three or four times before divine ſervice: we muſt meet at the throne of grace, or meet but ſeldom. O when will the communion of ſaints be compleat?

Lord

Lord haſten the time, and let me have a place among them that love thee, and love one another in ſincerity!

I ſet out in two days for the country. O may I be faithful! harmleſs like a dove, wiſe like a ſerpent, and bold as a lion, for the common cauſe! O Lord do not forſake me, ſtand by the weakeſt of thy ſervants and enable thy children to bear with me, and wreſtle with thee in my behalf! O bear with me dear Sir, and give me your bleſſing every day, and the Lord will return to you ſevenfold.

I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your unworthy Servant,

JOHN FLETCHER.

LETTER IV.

[From the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, to Miſs F—, and Miſs R—.]

Dear Siſters, October 1, 1759.

I Have been putting off writing to you, leſt the action of writing ſhould divert my Soul from the awful and delightful worſhip it is engaged in; but now conclude I ſhall be no loſer, if I invite you to love him my ſoul loveth, to dread him my ſoul dreadeth, to adore him my ſoul adoreth: ſink with me, or rather let me ſink with you, before the Throne of Grace; and while Cherubims veil their faces, and cry out in tender fear and exquiſite trembling. Holy! holy! holy! let us put our mouths in the duſt, and echo back the ſolemn

ſound,

found, Holy! holy! holy! Let us plunge ourselves in that ocean of purity: let us try to fathom the depths of divine mercy; and convinced of the impossibility of such an attempt, let us lose ourselves in them; let us be comprehended by God, if we cannot comprehend him; let us be supremely happy in God; let the intenseness of our happiness border upon misery, because we can make him no return. Let our head become waters, and our eyes a fountain of *tears---tears* of humble repentance, of solemn joy, of silent admiration, of exalted adoration, of raptured desires, of enflamed transports, of speechless awe. My God and my all!---your God and your all! our God and our all! Praise him; and with our souls blended into one by divine love, *let us with one mouth glorify the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; our *Father, who is over all, through all and in us all.* I charge you before the Lord Jesus who *giveth life and more abundant life.* I intreat you by all the actings of faith, the stretchings of hope, the flames of love you have ever felt, sink to greater depths of self-abasing repentance, rise to greater heights of Christ-exalting joy; and let him who *is able to do exceeding abundantly more than you ask or think,* carry on, and *fulfil in you the work of faith with power*; *with that power whereby he subdueth all things unto himself: be stedfast* in hope, *unmoveable* in patience and love, *always abounding in the* outward and inward *labour of love, and receive the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

I am, dear Sisters,

Your real Well-wisher,

JOHN FLETCHER.

LET-

LETTER V.

[From the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, to the Rev. Mr. Wesley.]

Madeley, June 6, 1781.

Rev. and dear Sir,

I Rejoice to hear that your spiritual bow abides in strength. I would have wished you joy about it since my arrival, if I knew where a letter could overtake you. I heartily thank you about the directions you give me to hinder my bow, so far split, from breaking quite. Now I must imitate your prudence, or the opportunity of doing it will soon be lost for good.

I would do something in the Lord's vineyard, but I have not strength. I can hardly, without over-doing myself, visit the sick of my Parish; I was better when I left Switzerland, than I am now; I had a great pull back in venturing to preach in the fields, in the Cevennes, to about two thousand French Protestants. I rode thirty miles to that place from Montpellier, on horseback, but was obliged to be brought back in a carriage. And now that I am here I can neither serve my Church, nor get it properly served. Mr. G—s owns, the place is not fit for him, nor he for it. He will go when I can get some body to help me: could you spare me brother B——? It would be a charity. Unless I can get a Curate zealous enough to stir among the people, I will give up the place: it would be little comfort to me to stay here to see the dead bury the dead. I thank God however, for resignation to his will.

As

As soon as I shall discern it clearly, I shall follow it, for I trust I have learned in what state soever I am, therewith to be content. What a blessing is Christ to the soul, and health to the body! When you go to, or come from the Conference, be so good as to remember that you have now a pilgrim's house in the way from Shrewsbury to Broseley; and do not go and climb our hills without baiting. At our first interview, I shall ask your thoughts about a French Work or two I have upon the anvil; but which I fear I shall not have time to finish. Be that as it will, God needs not the hand of Uzzah nor my finger, to keep up his ark. I read with pleasure and edification, your Arminian Magazine. Your storehouse is inexhaustible. The Lord strengthen you to *Nestor's* years, or rather, to the useful length of St. *John's* life. It is worth living to serve the Church, and to teach Christians to love one another.

I am, Rev. and dear Sir,

Your affectionate, though unprofitable Servant,

JOHN FLETCHER.

LETTER VI.

[To the same.]

Madeley, June 24, 1781.

Rev. and dear Sir,

AS to Miss *L*——, I believe her to be a simple, holy follower of the Lord. Nothing throws *unscriptural* Mysticism down like holding out the promise of the Father, and the fulness of the Spirit, to be received *now*, *by faith* in the two Promisers, the *Father* and the *Son*. Ah! what is the

the *penal fire* of the Myſtics, to the *burning love* of the *Spirit*, revealing the glorious power of the *Father* and the *Son*, according to John xiv. 26, and filling us with all the fulneſs of God? Plain Scripture is better than all Myſtic refinements.

When I was at N——-, near Geneva, three Miniſters received the Word, and preached the Truth. When perſecution aroſe becauſe of the Word, the two Paſtors were afraid; but the Curate of the firſt Paſtor, a Burgeſs of the town, ſtood by me. This Timothy opened his houſe, when the Paſtors ſhut both their pulpits and houſes; and heard him preach a Diſcourſe before I came away worthy of *you*, Sir, upon the heights and depths of holineſs. He wrote an apology for me, which he ſent to the head of the perſecuting Clergy, and ſo ſtopped the torrent of wrath. He made obſervations upon the miſchief done to Chriſtianity by a bad Clergy, ſuch as George Fox, and you, Sir, would not diſown. When I told him of you and the Methodiſts, he expreſt a great deſire to come to England, to hear you, to ſee the Engliſh brethren, and to learn Engliſh, that he might read your Works, and perhaps tranſlate ſome of them. He can have no Living in his own country, becauſe he will not *ſwear to proſecute all who propagate Arminian Tenets:* which is more honeſt than the Clergy, many of whom are Arians, Socinians or Deiſts, and do not ſcruple to take the Calvinian Oaths! I ſhall endeavour to wait upon you at Leeds at the time of the Conference: in the mean time,

I am, Rev. and dear Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
And affectionate Son in the Goſpel,
JOHN FLETCHER.

LETTER. VII.

[From the Houſekeeper at Kingſwood-School to the Rev. J. Weſley.]

Kingſwood, Oct. 30, 1748.

Dear and Rev. Sir,

WHEN I look back upon my paſt life, and ſee the directing and over-ruling hand of my gracious God, I am aſtoniſhed, and cry out, Lord, what is man? and what am I? an ungrateful, rebellious worm, not worthy the ground I tread upon. Even in this laſt call of his Providence, how have I reſiſted, and mixed bitter draughts in my own cup, which the Lord never deſigned for me? But it was my perverſeneſs and littleneſs of faith: I liſtened to the voice of the enemy, rather than the voice of God: I could not truſt him, though he had been my refuge in every time of trouble. How did he gently ſtrive to ſubdue my ſtubborn ſpirit, calming my fears, and ſhining in upon my ſoul with ſuch clear, demonſtrative light, that I could no longer withſtand. I then roſe up, and feebly followed the ſmall ſtill voice. I ſoon found obedience brings its own reward. My anxiety, my doubts, and diſtruſt all vaniſhed, and a ſweet calm ſucceeded, which has continued ever ſince. I know not what the Lord is about to do with me; but I am enabled to leave it all to him. O may I never again take the matter out of his great hand; but lay my body, ſoul, and ſpirit, all that I have and am, at his feet! O that he would make me as a weaned child, ſimply looking up to him for all things!

The ſpirit of this family is a reſemblance of the houſhold above. As far as I can diſcern, they are given up to God, and purſue but the one great end. The Lord in a peculiar manner preſerveth us from the rocks on either hand, and we ſafely walk between them. Having our God for our guide, what can harm us? Nothing but loſing ſight of him; and for this there is no neceſſity.

If any is afraid this ſchool will eclipſe and darken others, or that it will train up ſoldiers to proclaim open war againſt the God of this world, I believe it is not a groundleſs fear. For if God continues to bleſs us, "one of theſe little ones ſhall chaſe a thouſand." I doubt not but there will ariſe ambaſſadors for the King of kings from this obſcure ſpot, that ſhall ſpread his glory all abroad, and bring many ſouls unto the knowledge of the truth.

Dear Sir, we beg your conſtant prayers, with thoſe of all the brethren with you. May the Lord bear you all as on eagles wings, and comfort and eſtabliſh your hearts together! This day I felt my ſpirit mingling with my beloved London friends: and it was ſweet conſolation. It will not be long ere we ſhall meet in our Father's houſe, to rejoice together throughout an happy eternity. Pray always for

Your unworthy,

affectionate Servant in the Goſpel,

MARY DAVEY.

LETTER. VIII.

[To the same, From a poor, happy Woman, then living in the Orphan-House at Newcastle.]

Newcastle, Nov. 1, 1748.

Rev. Dear Sir,

I THINK we never had a more blessed time in this house, since it was a house. I know of no thing amiss betwixt Sister M—— and me: but we cannot be as one soul (as you express it); for you know, she must have a little pre-eminence. I am exceeding willing that she should; and so we live in great peace, and, I believe, in love.

You may expect plain dealing from me: and if I thought you distrusted me, I would not write; but I am fully persuaded you do not: and therefore why should I hide a heart from you, that is quite uncovered before the all-seeing eyes of God? I may possibly deal too openly with others; but I am fully convinced, I never can with you. Nay, I could heartily wish that you saw all that is in my heart; you could then be a better judge of it than I am myself.

I know not how to agree to the not working. I am still unwilling to take any thing from any body. I work out of choice, having never yet learned, how long a woman can be idle and innocent. I have had as blessed times in my soul sitting at work, as ever I had in my life; especially in the night-time, when I see nothing but the light of a candle and a white cloth, hear nothing but the sound of my own breath, with God in my sight and heaven in my soul, I think myself one of the happiest creatures below the skies. I do

not

not complain, that God has not made me for a fine thing, to be set up to be gazed at; but I can heartily bless him, that he has made me just what I am, a creature capable of the enjoyment of himself. If I go to the window and look out, I see the moon and stars, I meditate a while on the silence of the night, consider this world as a beautiful structure, the work of an almighty hand; then sit down to work again, and think myself one of the happiest beings in it. I do not murmur because I have not what they call goods of fortune, or a little skin deep beauty; but I am happy, because as long as God lives, I shall enjoy him; so long as there is a heaven, I shall possess it. If this thought cannot make me happy, without any thing else, I deserve to be miserable. Then how can I enough adore that Redeemer, who bought all these privileges for me with his own blood? But here words fail me, and I can say no more: I sink deep into my own nothingness, and cry out, with astonishment, O what has God done for me!

O pray for me, that I may no more be found unfaithful. Dear Sir, pray for me, that I may be always watchful and serious; that all my conversation may adorn the gospel. To the divine protection I commit that which is dearest to me on earth, and remain.

Your affectionate and loving child,

JEANNIE KEITH.

LETTER. IX.

[From Mrs. Elizabeth Mann, to Mr. Wesley.]

London, September 14, 1749.

Rev. and Dear Sir,

I Trust you do not forget to pray for me; for, indeed, I have need. I feel myself now, as at all times, a poor helpless creature, unable to do any thing without the mighty power of God, unless it be to sin against him; and the more I feel of my own weakness, the more I desire to feel of it. I think I would fain be nothing, that Christ might be all in all: it is so blessed and pleasant a thing, to receive all from him, who is so ready to bestow upon me, that I would not accept of any strength or help, but what cometh from him alone: and, indeed, I have need of no other. His grace is sufficient for me. O, what a mystery is the life of faith! how weak is the soul that hangs on Jesus; and yet, how strong? Of itself it is not able to stand against the least enemy; but must necessarily fall a prey to the weakest, even of its inbred foes: but through him it is able, not only to wrestle with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers: with the rulers of the darkness of this world; and with spiritual wickedness in high places: and is made more than conqueror, through his love, who is become the Captain of our salvation.

I often meditate on the happiness of those souls, who have wholly ceased from their own works, and feel every moment that it is Christ that worketh

eth all their works in them; and are always ſenſible, that it is not themſelves that ſpeak, but the Spirit of their Father, which ſpeaketh in them: and whoſe every thought proceeds from that fountain of all holineſs and perfection. O what a heaven is there opened in that ſoul! and what a burning and ſhining light is it to all around! Within all is holy and undefiled, and there is nothing to annoy or diſturb that peace, which continually floweth as a river: and I think to all without them, their words muſt come with life and power. O what a reſt is this! how worthy of the Almighty Author, to beſtow on all that fear and wait upon him! And yet, it is no wonder, that human nature ſhould ſtagger at the greatneſs of the promiſe through unbelief: eſpecially, as it is ſo much the intereſt of the great enemy of mankind, we ſhould: indeed he does not much concern himſelf, when men give only a cool aſſent to the truth of the promiſe: but, when a ſoul is ſtirred up to follow hard after it, then the devil ſtirs up all the unbelief of our nature, and is continually ſuggeſting, how can theſe things be? But when a ſoul is enabled to ſurmount theſe oppoſitions, and can ſteadily behold the promiſe, though it be afar off, how inexcuſable is it, if it be not every moment panting and longing for the poſſeſſion of it? But, alas! where falls this cenſure? It overwhelms myſelf: now my ſoul earneſtly deſires, and pants after that glorious liberty: but how often is it dull and languid, in the purſuit thereof: nay, perhaps, for ſome moments, I loſe ſight of the high prize of my calling. O when ſhall this be ſo no more: when ſhall my ſoul cry without ceaſing, "Come Lord Jeſus, and ſet up thy kingdom fully in my heart; and reign thou thyſelf the Lord "of every motion there."

Dear

Dear Sir, help me by your prayers, not only to follow after this reſt, but to attain it. And that the Lord may bleſs you in all your ways, and proſper the work of your hands upon you, and fill your ſoul with all his fulneſs, is the prayer, and unfeigned deſire of

Your unworthy Daughter,
ELIZABETH MANN.

LETTER X.

[From the Rev. Mr. Weſley, to Miſs ———.]
February 21, 1759.

PROBABLY, Miſs ———, this may be the laſt trouble of the kind, which you will receive from me. Therefore you may forgive me this: and the rather, when you conſider my motives to it. You know, I can have no temporal view: I can have none but a faint, diſtant hope, (becauſe with God all things are poſſible) of doing ſome ſervice to one whom I love. And this may anſwer the queſtion which you might naturally aſk, "What would you have? What do you want with *me*?" I want you, not to be a convert to my opinions; but to be a member of Chriſt, a child of God, and an heir of his kingdom! Be any thing, as to outward profeſſion, ſo you are lowly in heart: ſo you reſiſt and conquer every motion of pride, and have that mind in you, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus. Be what you pleaſe beſides: only be meek and gentle, and in patience poſſeſs your ſoul: ſo that one may truly ſay to you

Calm

Calm thou ever art within,
All unruffled, all ſerene!

Hear what preacher you will: but hear the voice of God, and beware of prejudice and every unkind temper! Beware of fooliſh and hurtful deſires, or they will pierce you through with many ſorrows. In one word, be any thing, but a trifler: a Trifler with God and your own Soul. It was not for this, that God gave you

"A mind ſuperior to the vulgar herd!"

No, Miſs ———, no! But that you might employ all your talents to the glory of him that gave them. O do not grieve the holy Spirit of God! Is he not ſtill ſtriving with you? Striving to make you, not almoſt, but altogether a chriſtian? Indeed *you* muſt be all or nothing: a ſaint, or a devil! Eminent in ſin, or holineſs. The good Lord deliver you from every ſnare, and guide your feet in the way of peace! How great a pleaſure would this give to all your real friends, and in particular to,

Your affectionate Servant,
For Chriſt's ſake,
JOHN WESLEY.

LETTER XI.

[To the ſame.]

Colcheſter, March 20, 1759.

MY Wife, Miſs ———, ſurpriſed me laſt night, by informing me, you are left miſtreſs of a large

a large fortune. Shall I say, agreeably surprised me? I cannot tell: because I believe there is another world. And I do not know, what influence this change may have on your condition: therefore I am in fear, and in hope. You may be hereby far more happy, or far more miserable in eternity! O make a stand! Consider the situation you are in: perhaps never before were you in so great danger. You know a little of your natural tempers: now you have means of indulging, and thereby inflaming them to the uttermost. And how many will incite you so to do? How few will dare to warn you against it? Now what food will you have for *pride?* What infinite temptations, to think more highly than you ought to think? You do so already. But oh, where will you stop! The good Lord arrest the storm in mid career! How impetuously now, (unless God interpose) must *self-will* whirl you along? How deeply (unless he help) will you shortly be immersed in practical atheism? As ten thousand things will concur to drive God out of your thoughts, as much as if he were not in the world. But above all, how will you escape from being swallowed up in *idolatry?* Love of the world, such as you never knew before!

Hitherto you have been greatly superior to every delicacy in *food:* but even this may assault you now: and perhaps raise in you other *desires*, which you are now a stranger to. At present, you are above the follies of *dress:* but will you be so a twelvemonth hence? May you not easily slide into the *pride of life*, in this as well as other instances? Especially considering how your *vanity* will be gratified thereby. For who will not *admire* and *applaud* your admirable taste? It will only remain for you to *marry* some agreeable person, that

that has much wit and ſenſe, with little or no religion; then it is finiſhed! Either you will be throughly miſerable in this world, or miſerable to eternity.

"But what buſineſs is this of yours? Cannot you let me alone? What have I to do with you?" Believe me, I could very eaſily let you alone, if I had not a real and tender good-will toward you: and if I did not know (what perhaps you do not) that you have need even of me. You want friends who underſtand you well, and who dare tell you the whole plain truth: and yet not in a ſurly, imperious manner; for then you could not receive it. I have endeavoured to do this once more. Will you not forgive me? I cannot but think, if you do not thank, you will at leaſt excuſe,

Your affectionate Servant,
JOHN WESLEY.

LETTER XII.

[From the Rev. Mr. Weſley, to ———.]

Dear Sir, May 16, 1759.

SINCE I received your favour, I have had many thoughts on worldly and chriſtian prudence. What is the nature of each? How do they differ? How may we diſtinguiſh one from the other?

It ſeems *worldly prudence*, either purſues *worldly ends*, riches, honour, eaſe, or pleaſure; or purſues chriſtian ends, on *worldly maxims*, or by *worldly means*. The grand maxims which obtain in the world are, the more power, the more money,

money, the more learning, and the more reputation a man has, the more good he will do. And whenever a chriſtian, purſuing the nobleſt ends, forms his behaviour by theſe maxims, he will infallibly (though perhaps by inſenſible degrees) decline into worldly prudence. He will uſe more or leſs of conformity to the world, if not in ſin, yet in doing ſome things that are good in themſelves, yet (all things conſidered) are not good to him: and perhaps at length uſing guile, or diſguiſe, ſimulation or diſſimulation, either ſeeming to be what he is not, or not ſeeming to be what he is. By any of theſe marks may worldly prudence be diſcerned from the wiſdom which is from above.

This, *chriſtian prudence* purſues *chriſtian maxims* and by *chriſtian means*. The ends it purſues are holineſs in every kind, and in the higheſt degree; and uſefulneſs in every kind and degree. And herein it proceeds on the following maxims, The help that is done upon earth, God doth it himſelf: it is he that worketh all in all. And that, not by human power: generally he uſes weak things to confound the ſtrong: not by men of wealth; moſt of his choiceſt inſtruments may ſay, "ſilver and gold have I none:" not by learned or "wiſe men after the fleſh: no; the fooliſh things hath God choſen: not by men of reputation; but by the men that were as the filth and off-ſcouring of the world: all which is for this plain reaſon, "That no fleſh may glory in his ſight."

Chriſtian prudence purſues theſe ends upon theſe principles, by only chriſtian means. A truly prudent chriſtian, while, in things purely indifferent, he becomes all things to all men, yet wherever duty is concerned, matters the example

of all mankind no more than a grain of ſand. His word is then,

——— Non me, qui cætera vincit
Impetus, at rapido contrarius evehor orbi.

He will not, to gain the favour, or ſhun the hate of all, omit the leaſt point of duty. He cannot prevail upon himſelf on any account or pretence, to uſe either ſimulation or diſſimulation. There is no guile in his mouth: no evaſion or ambiguity. Having one deſire, one deſign, to glorify God with his body and with his ſpirit; having only one fear,

Leſt a motion, or a word,
Or thought ariſe, to grieve his Lord.

Having one rule, the word of God; one guide, even his Spirit, he goes on in child-like ſimplicity. Continually ſeeing him that is inviſible, he walks in open day. Looking unto Jeſus, and deriving ſtrength from him, he goes on in his ſteps, in the work of faith, the labour of love, the patience of hope, till he is called up, to be ever with the Lord.

Oh, that this were in all points your own character! Surely you deſire it above all things. But how ſhall you attain? Difficulties and hinderances ſurround you on every ſide! Can you bear with my plainneſs? I believe you can? Therefore I will ſpeak without any reſerve. I fear, you have ſcarce one friend who has not more or leſs of the prudence which is not from above. And I doubt you have (in or near your own rank) hardly one example of true chriſtian prudence! Yet I am perſuaded, your own heart

adviſes you right, or rather God in your heart. Oh, that you may hearken to his voice alone, and let all creatures keep ſilence before him! Why ſhould they incumber you with Saul's armour? If you eſſay to go forth thus, it will be in vain. You have no need of this, neither of his ſword or ſpear: for you truſt in the Lord of Hoſts. Oh, go forth in his ſtrength; and with the ſtones of the brook, you ſhall overthrow all your enemies!

I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient Servant for Chriſt's ſake,

JOHN WESLEY.

LETTER XIII.

[To the Rev. Mr. Weſley]

Rev. Sir, Feb. 1761.

I Have juſt received yours, for which I thank you. But alas! how apt are we to miſtake in judging of others? You imagine *ſaying* and *doing*, are with me the ſame thing: but indeed they are not. For though, bleſſed be God, I have much light in many things, I have ſtill very little power. O how wide is the difference, between an Outward and an Inward Chriſtian! I now know, I may be outwardly devoted, and given up to the Work of God, and yet, whenever Jeſus draws near to bleſs me, never be found at home: never liſtening to the ſtill, ſmall Voice, by which alone true Wiſdom can be learnt. But I am not circumſpect in outward things: indeed I am not. I am very negligent in denying myſelf and taking up my croſs. Any thing that would help me in the

practice

practice of this, would do me much ſervice. Never was my ſoul in more danger than now; and I feel the want of inward Holineſs more than ever. It is a very dangerous precipice, to be bleſt to the ſouls of others, and needs the whole Omnipotence of God, to ſave us from being deſtroyed thereby. For I often find a Work of Mercy, nay, a Means of Grace, ſtand between my Soul and Chriſt. I have toiled till my body was almoſt laid up, when all the time it would have been more pleaſing to God, had I been hewing wood or drawing water, with my ſoul evenly carried out after Him. O Sir, Holineſs, Holineſs is the thing we want; to have Jeſus our all in all! Till this is effected, whenever I point another to the Lamb of God, ſomething in myſelf cries, "Behold me! behold me!" And I feel the weight of thoſe words,

"Yea though by faith vaſt hills I could remove,
Yet *all* is nothing without perfect Love."

And why ſhould this be delayed any longer? What amazing Anſwers to many Prayers, have both you and I received, with regard to outward things? And will not the ſame love more abundantly conſtrain him to bleſs us in our ſouls? ——Surely this is an acceptable time! Yet the devil continually ſtrives to diſcourage me, and ſuggeſts, "God will not do for *thee* as he has done for others." But I *will* truſt him: and I *do believe*, if from this time we fix our eye ſteadily on the prize of our high calling, the Lord will ſhortly bring it into our hearts. The Lord's ear is not heavy, nor his hand ſhortened that it cannot ſave. O that we may now pierce heaven with our cries, and never ceaſe till we ſee his

full Salvation! May the Lord renew your ſtrength, and fill your ſoul with love!

I am, yours, &c.

M. B.

LETTER XIV.

[To the ſame.]

Dear Sir, March 7, 1761.

THE Lord has of late laid me on the hearts of many of his children: ſo that ſeveral of them ſaid, they could not reſt, till he had delivered me. For this fortnight he has been many times very nigh; but yet the ſons of Anak ſeemed to triumph, till on Thurſday morning, being at prayer, I felt an hope, that he would keep me *every moment*. Yet I durſt not ſay, "Chriſt *has* delivered me:" but "he *will* bruiſe Satan under my feet ſhortly." And I felt, as it were, a claim to Jeſus, ſuch as I never remember before. On Friday I ſaw his exceeding willingneſs to ſave, and could almoſt believe. At Interceſſion, I felt every word ſink into my ſoul: yet ſoon after I was ſurrounded with ſuch ſorrow and anguiſh, that I could not forbear crying out exceedingly. I then felt a little power to believe; and my ſoul was calm. And I could not pray for any thing, but that he would do with me what ſeemed him good. When I waked this morning, my ſoul ſeemed abſolutely empty: only I found power to lie before Jeſus. After we left you, we went to Mr. *Jay's*, when the power of God was preſent indeed, and even I could ſay, "He

will

will keep me without ſpot unto the day of redemption."

What the Lord has done, I know not; but I find an exceeding great change. Thoſe ſins that held me in the cloſeſt bondage, I know not what is become of them. I am accuſed almoſt every moment; but before I can look, the thing is gone. I feel no deſire, but for Chriſt: no fear but of loſing my hold of him. Yet I am often ſo tempted to give it up, that it is almoſt more than I can bear. I have but little love for God, though I love nothing ſo well. I feel a little difference every hour, and I long to ſee Jeſus glorified. Yet I do not ſeem to be ſo joined to him as I would: only under his peculiar care, it ſeems, the man of ſin is taken out of my heart, but I am not aſſured he ſhall never return. I find more need of watchfulneſs and prayer than ever, and of the means of all kinds. May there not be a meaſure of pure love, and doubts remain? Be that as it may, I will truſt in Jeſus. And though a hoſt of foes ſurround me, I know he can deliver me from them all, and caſt them under my feet.

I remain, yours, &c.

M. B.

LETTER XV.

[To the ſame.]

Dear Sir, May 5, 1761.

IF one who has ſo much more grace than me was deceived, how can I ſtand againſt all the ſnares thrown in my way? I have no ſecurity but this:

I am all weakneſs: Chriſt is all ſtrength. I dare not look forward in any thing: I only judge for this moment. O pray for me, that the Lord may teach me in all things! The ways of God are paſt finding out: may his dear Will be done!

In order to obtain the bleſſed *fruit* of love, your ſureſt way is, firſt to get the *Root*. It is the Will of God, you ſhould *now* receive it; and then all the reſt will follow. O let us look to Jeſus! He knows our inmoſt ſoul, and he will heal our every wound Do *you* fear you have not begun to be a Chriſtian? O how dreadfully did I fear this, the laſt quarter of an hour before the Lord gave me the great bleſſing! Continually was Satan darting that at me, "Thou art not juſtified!" For a time it much diſcouraged me. But I found the readieſt way was, to go immediately to Jeſus, and ſay, (whether I could *feel* it or not,) "I caſt me afreſh on thy atoning blood. I *will* truſt in it; and if I periſh, I will periſh at thy feet! I *will* believe; for I am thine." I held to this, whatever Satan could ſay. And this going continually to Chriſt, is all we want in every ſtate. Were you ever ſo polluted, waſh in the all-cleanſing blood, and you ſhall be white as ſnow. O fly every moment to your Ark! I know the Lord is nigh to bleſs you. Caſt yourſelf, again and again, on that precious blood that flowed ſo freely for you! Claim *your* Saviour! He is all your own: he hath given himſelf for *you!* Yea, his very life he did not with-hold, but bought *your holineſs* with blood divine.

I am, yours, &c.

M. B.

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LETTER XVI.

[From Miſs B. to a Friend.]

Dear Friend, May 29, 1762.

I See there is a jealouſy in God, which I did not ſo clearly diſcern before. Well, this I can ſay, bleſſed be his Name, *all* my *will* is his, and I renounce, from the bottom of my heart, every comfort that does not ſpring from his pure Love alone. But this I know, God has ſo laid your burden upon me, that I muſt continue to cry exceedingly for you. Oh take warning by *me!* That Saviour who ſeeks your heart, is jealous above all you can conceive. He will not have a divided heart; no, not in the leaſt degree. O that he may now deſcend, and fill your ſoul with the pure flame of *his* Love! I know there is a furnace for you to paſs through, and the longer before you enter, the hotter it will grow. But fear not, my dear Friend! He that will walk with you is the Son of God. The preſent difficulty is here: how to enter into this furnace? But is not God faithful? And will he not ſhew you, how to put away all That which his Spirit abhors? I know he will: only let your weapons be earneſt Prayer, conſtant and continued, (whether you feel a deſire to it or not.) And in a ſhort time the Lord will guide you, as his pillar of fire did the Iſraelites, till every enemy is fallen before you, and you are in full poſſeſſion of the promiſed land!

I am yours, &c.

M. B.

LETTER XVII.

[To the same.]

Dear Friend, June 5, 1762.

O How blind and dark is all human wisdom! teach me, my Saviour, by thy Spirit! I thought God called me to give up corresponding with *you:* and I found, I could readily comply. But whether he does call me to it or no, I cannot see. I rather think, he does not. It seems to me at present, I am to continue this prayer, "Let thy Star appear, and I will follow it:" and that in the mean time, I am to continue writing; only with the closest prayer and strictest watchfulness.

The burden I feel for you is very heavy; much heavier than I used to feel for my own soul. But if in a little measure I am like my Lord, what does his tender heart feel for you? The way you are to take is straight before you: fly to your loving, bleeding, dying Saviour. See him hanging on the accursed tree, his head drooping beneath *your* load, and crying in the midst of his agony, "Fear not! all thy sins were laid on my head, and I bore them all away! Return unto *me*; for I have redeemed thee! Wound me not afresh! Renounce all for my sake, and I will adorn thee with the robes of my Righteousness." O accept the offer! He is *your* Saviour. Cast yourself just as you are, upon him!

Shutting yourself up will not do. The root is within. Cut off every thing that would nourish it. Those things, we here falsly call *Innocent,* are the right eye to be plucked out. If you were be-

sieging

ſieging ſtrong enemies, and had no hopes of conquering but by ſtarving them, would it be *innocent*, now and then to throw them a little bread? O beware of ſuch innocent things, as may coſt you your life! And ought you not to guard others, as well as yourſelf, againſt them? Remember, you are anſwerable, if you do not teach us, the ſtricteſt, narroweſt path of Self-denial! Yet God will be better pleaſed with your ſacrificing yourſelf to him, than if you were to ſave the whole world.

I am, yours, &c.

M. B.

LETTER. XVIII.

[From Miſs B. to a Friend].

Dear Friend, July 6, 1762.

I *Do* find enough in Jeſus: I dare to ſay, I love him with all my heart. Therefore the difficulty on *my* ſide is done away, and I am not tempted as before, concerning *you*. But O! beware, leſt *in any degree*, I ſhould prove a temptation to you. I fear leſt you ſhould ſo reſt on any created Good, as to feel leſs need of Jeſus to reſt on. O fly for refuge, reſt and Happineſs to your bleeding Lord! Though you ſhould feel as if he did not hear or anſwer, yet force yourſelf upon him, and plead the promiſe, That he *will not ſend* you *a warfare at your own coſt*. And O! be earneſt with him, to *tear away* your All, if you cannot *give* it! O that you may caſt your whole ſoul on Jeſus, and find in his Love your abiding home! What heights and depths of Holineſs have many attained

attained with half the helps and half the time that we have had? My dear Friend, from this moment, let us know nothing but Christ! But let us remember! If we would know Him, we must know him crucified. Yea, we must be crucified with him, or we can never reign with him.

How may you be crucified with him? The thing you want is Faith: Faith to believe that from this moment the Captain of the Lord's host will go before you, and subdue all your Enemies beneath your feet? By the power of that Faith, you would say to the mountain of Sin, "Be thou cast into the sea, and it would obey. O cry for Faith! May Jesus bless you!" Pray *for us*, as we do for *you!*

I am yours, &c.

M. B.

LETTER. XIX.

Dear Friend, July 16, 1762.

I Have many fears lest you should find such a Rest in the enjoyment of your Friends, as shall hide from your eyes your need of Christ to rest in. When I cry earnestly for you, it seems to me, that this is the very hinderance. And I tremble, lest I should be one, and you insensible of it. Were you sensible of the danger, and watchful against it, I should be no more hurtful to *you*, than you were to *me* the last two months, when I really fought with all my might.

Sure I am, that my Jesus, who has saved you from ten thousand dangers, is now waiting, yea longing to fill you with the Faith that opens heaven. And though we find our heart full of corruption,

ruption, yet I am a witneſs, if we diſcern and ſtrive againſt it, it will not long hinder, but God will ſoon *deſtroy the man of ſin, by the breath of his mouth.*

I bleſs God, I find the croſs very profitable: though at times it has lately lain ſo heavy upon me, that without a very particular aſſiſtance, the fleſh would have failed before him. I am not conſcious of any will to lay it down, but reſt in this, Thy will be done in all things! It is enough: I can truſt him to keep my will from ever departing from him. He does keep me night and day.

I find Jeſus very preſent with my ſoul. And his Spirit continually reproves me, if I ſpeak uſeleſly, or too much, or any thing in the leaſt degree contrary to love. But I am not always ſo on my guard, as immediately to hear his voice. Therefore I fall exceeding ſhort of the perfect Law: but I know my intereſt in the atoning blood. And my will does not err; though as a child juſt learning to read, I make a thouſand blunders. Pray for me, and help me by pointing out the very *narroweſt path.*

I am yours, &c.

M. B.

LETTER XX.

[From Mrs. W. to the Rev. Mr. Weſley.]

Dear Sir, May 2, 1761.

I Rejoice at your approving of my ardour for the cauſe of God, in whoſe ſtrength I hope to go on, ſo as to amaze myſelf, as well as thoſe, who

who depend upon ſinning as long as they live. The Lord has graciouſly given me a clean heart, and I hope to uſe it in his ſervice. I find I ſpeak leſs than I did, and what I do ſpeak, I know is according to the will of God. And he enables me to baffle the aſſaults of wiſe, reaſoning men, by ſimply declaring, "I love the Lord with my whole heart, mind and ſoul."

I was thought to be ſtepping into eternity laſt week. But the Lord ſpared me, to go up with my children and ſervants, to Jeruſalem, to worſhip. He was there of a truth: I rejoiced exceedingly, that ever I was born. I delivered my children into the Lord's hands, with all I have, and all I am. I find my love to the Lord, deep and ſolemn, and can always rejoice in him. It is not in my power to deſcribe the bleſſings that are ſhowered upon us. I truſt the Lord will enlarge my powers, and that I ſhall employ them all for his praiſe. I think, he is willing to give *me* as much as any daughter he has on earth. O pray, that I may ſo uſe the grace received, as to gain ſouls for him. Do not think I boaſt, I feel myſelf a ſcrap of duſt. But the Lord has lifted me up. And for his own glorious name's ſake, he will ſuſtain me to the end. I am not able to ſtir, unleſs Jeſus help me: I am nothing! Chriſt is all in all!

Before you left town I was agonizing with exceſs of deſire to love God alone. I knew the power was ready, whenever I aſked for it in faith. I found it was like throwing myſelf into a rapid ſtream, where I muſt ſwim or periſh. The Lord gave me faith, and a ſweet ſerenity. Satan aſſaults; but Jeſus keeps the citadel. Yet as I get ſtrength, my inward trials are ſtronger, and ſtronger. But I rejoice, knowing they ſhall all work

work together for good. To love Jesus is heaven upon earth. But I know no greater pain, next to hearing his name blasphemed, than to be debarred from declaring his mercy wherever I am. O what a day will that be, when we shall see his face, and live with him for ever!

Pray that I may be steady. I carry much sail, and need much ballast. But the voyage is short. My Pilot commands the winds, and I do not fear gaining the wished-for port.

I remain yours, &c.

M. W.

LETTER XXI.

[From the same]

Dear Sir, May 30, 1761.

I Cannot tell how often I have been prevented, when I have intended to answer your encouraging Letter. Indeed, Sir, I must praise the Lord Jesus. O he is lovely, and is more precious to me every day. Glory be to his name, he fulfils his promises to my happy soul every hour: and I am in pain, when I am not some way employed to his honour. His tender care of me, melts me down, till I lose myself in him. And when I think, how near the time is come, that will deliver me to my Beloved, my soul grows too big for my breast, and I almost faint for joy. O what a calling is ours! To live with Christ Jesus my Lord, and that for ever! And does he not give us a foretaste of our bliss? Because my bodily strength was little, he has renewed it. Instead of creeping out of bed at ten, I am now waked by my Spouse, and rise at four, and all my family meet

before five. Prayer is sweet. I would not accept the empire of the world, to keep me from that food of immortal souls. When temptations harrass, till my body almost faints, my Lord is present with me. And glory be to his name, I can count it a blessing, when I am the most tried. I know it comes through him, to me his child, whom he eyes with earnest tenderness.

My son is much blest. He cries aloud for a clean heart, and attends the ordinances with keenness. *Harriot* is a proof of what the Lord can do in a child. Her prayers are indeed surprising. Many are struck at her confident petitions and boldness, in declaring her love to the Lord. My house is a heaven uopn earth. Hallelujah to the Lord.

I am yours, &c.

M. W.

LETTER. XXII.

[To the Rev. J. Wesley.]

Dear Sir, May 30, 1760.

I Hope your love will pardon my seeming neglect, in not answering you sooner. I was much affected with the trial you mention; but it is difficult to write, unless I knew the particulars. And even then I should be utterly insufficient for the task. But this I know, if temptations increase, God will give a proportionable increase of strength.

You are set as a Mark for the devil and his children to shoot at, and that in every kind. You may expect it. And who would not be willing, yea,

yea, more than willing, to bear all that men and devils can lay upon them, to have such fruit of their ministry, as God is pleased to bless you with? I trust, nothing will be able to induce you to shrink in any measure from the work that God hath set before you. My continual prayer to God is, that you may be, not only preserved, but blessed and strengthened, and made more than conqueror. O that simpathy of spirit! O that bearing one anothers burdens! Who can conceive it but they that feel it? I pray God to fulfil in me the prayer and desire of your soul. I trust he will still keep me a little child, and yet make me a Father in Christ. I cannot find, upon the closest examination, any decay in my love to God, or that I love him less at one time than another. I am now, and always, happy in God. Love him less! No, I cannot. Every repeated instance of his goodness, creates in me stronger returns of thankfulness and adoration, till I am many times lost in wonder, love and praise.

Time seems to me to fly exceeding swift. I see, we are on the brink of eternity: and therefore long to make the very best use of the present moment. I find sometimes a kind of heaviness through temptations, but no fainting in my mind. Yet I have sometimes found, as if my mind would have cleaved too much to those that excel in virtue. But the Lord, by some blessed means or other, prevents it; so that in some sense, I stand alone, as though there were only God and myself in the world.

O pray for me, that he may fulfil in me all the good pleasure of his will, and make me just what he would have me to be!

I am, dear Sir,
Your affectionate and loving Sister,
RUTH HALL.

LETTER XXIII.

[To the ſame.]

Honoured Sir, May 14, 1757.

I Do not forget you, but bear you ever on my heart before the Lord. I often find communion with you, though abſent in body. O the length of the love of Chriſt! it reaches through earth's remoteſt bounds, uniting the children of God in one, and joining earth to heaven. I find no deſire to ſpeak any thing of myſelf: but becauſe I believe it my duty, therefore I do it. Yet properly, it is not of myſelf, but of God: for I am nothing; God is all in all! And ſuch he is to me: he is all my deſire, all my hope, joy, love, delight. Yea, the Three-One God, is my heaven on earth, and will be ſo for ever.

The entire reſignation I feel, is that from which my greateſt happineſs flows. But this does not at all hinder my enjoying God, firſt in his children, then in the leaſt of his mercies. The conſtant aim of my ſoul is, to give glory to God in the higheſt, and to eſtabliſh peace and good-will among men: yet am I fully willing, that all I ſay or do ſhould be ſet at nought, and forgotten by God and man.

From the relation I ſtand in to my heavenly Father, I beſt conceive the relation I am in to you: and therefore cannot but long, that you may increaſe, though I ſhould decreaſe. And O! permit me, from the fulneſs of my heart to ſpeak: I know the Lord Jeſus loves you, and that you are a choſen Veſſel unto him, ſeparated to plant and eſtabliſh his Goſpel. And viewing you in this character, I am not worthy to unloſe the latchet

of

of your ſhoes. But if I may take the liberty to ſpeak, as to a Chriſtian Friend, I may aſk, Do you love the Lord Jeſus more than any perſon or thing? Do you find more happineſs in thinking or ſpeaking of him, than in thinking or ſpeaking of any creature? Does your ſoul delight in him? This is what my ſoul deſires for you: and I pray, that whatever is a hindrance to it, may be removed; and that you may be kept reſtleſs, till the full image of God be ſtampt upon your heart! I ſhall acknowledge it a favour, to have a Line from you: I deſire you will continue to inſtruct, exhort, reprove, and pray for your affectionate, though unworthy Daughter in Chriſt,

S. C——

LETTER II

[From the ſame.]

Honoured Sir, June 18, 1751

MY ſoul muſt ceaſe to love God, before I ceaſe to pray for you. There are heights and depths in the Lord Jeſus, that I cannot comprehend. Neither have I apprehended that for which I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus: but this one thing I do; forgetting the things behind, I reach forth to thoſe before, and am ſtill determined, nothing leſs than All ſhall ſatisfy my ſoul. I find my love riſes higher, and ſinks deeper into him, in whom dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily. O I long to be

" Plunged in the Godhead's deepeſt ſea,
And loſt in his immenſity!"

The Lord has lately given me a larger manifeſtation of himſelf, from which I find a fuller union with him. O who can explain the myſtery? The more I have, the leſs I ſeem to have: the ſtronger I am, the more deeply ſenſible am I of my own weakneſs. The more I know of God, the more I ſee, that I know nothing of him in compariſon. Yet does my ſoul centre in him, and reſt in him continually. And yet I cannot reſt; for I ſeem but juſt beginning to be a Chriſtian. Let not me, who have juſt put on the harneſs, boaſt like them who are putting it off.

I am fully employed for my Lord; but do daily get time for meditation and prayer. I am more perſuaded than ever, that nothing ſhall, for one moment, hinder the Lord Jeſus from loving me, or my ſoul from loving him, in time or eternity.

I am, dear Sir, your affectionate Child,

S. C.——

LETTER XXV.

[To the ſame.]

Honoured Sir, London, Dec. 31, 1757.

WHAT a wonderful depth is there in the Providence of God! We may well ſay with the Apoſtle, How unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out! But what we know not now, we ſhall know hereafter. And this we know even now, All things ſhall work together for good to them that love God.

I am not inſenſible of my preſent trial. It is the heavieſt and cloſeſt I have ever met with: and had

had not the eternal God been my refuge, I ſhould have ſunk under it from the beginning. But he is faithful, and as my day is, ſo he maketh my ſtrength to be. I have no room to complain. I am not yet "forſaken of all men, and dying in a cottage." Neither am I as they who wandered in ſheep-ſkins and goat-ſkins, and lodged in dens and caves of the earth. But I am ready. My ſpirit is reſolutely fixt, "To ſuffer all his righteous will."

I know nothing by myſelf, yet am I not hereby juſtified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. And ſurely he hath ſaid, "I have created in thee a clean heart, and renewed a right ſpirit within thee." O the depth of Love Divine! I can ſay no more. My thought is too big for utterance.

I have no deſire to give up my friends, but bleſs God for the good I receive through them. Yet if God himſelf cuts off the ſtream, he will lead me to the fountain. Therefore I am free from every creature; for God is all-ſufficient. But I do not believe it is the deſign of God to ſeparate us; only to purge away the droſs of nature, that there may be a more firm and ſpiritual union, than hath ever been yet.

Indeed I grieve and joy on your account. I grieve for the trial you have had, as well as the many others which you muſt have. May the Lord bear you above them all! But I joy in this, that I believe the one deſire of your ſoul is, to be wholly given up to God. And I pray God, that thoſe who ſpeak evil of you may be aſhamed, while they behold your good converſation in Chriſt. O that you may go on, through evil report and good report, denying yourſelf, in the minuteſt circumſtance, wherein you are liable to get hurt, and continually watching the motions of your heart, till all that is in you is "Holineſs to the Lord."

What-

Whatever is amiſs in this, you will forgive: and continue to inſtruct, reprove, and pray for your ever affectionate Child,

S. C——.

LETTER XXVI.

[From Mrs. S. R. to the Rev. Mr. Weſley.]

Briſtol, Feb. 1, 1758.

Rev. and dear Sir,

I Am thankful if my Lord continue to make me a bleſſing to your ſoul. For O! how I long for you to be holy, in ſpirit, ſoul, and body! Has God fixt a reſolution in your ſoul, to graſp the glorious prize? Do not you depend too much upon any creature? We muſt not ſay, "Lord, work by this or that perſon or thing. Work as thou wilt, and how thou wilt! Only finiſh thy work in my ſoul." O dear Sir, It is a good, but painful fight: indeed it is fighting up to the knees in blood. Nature will not ſubmit to die. But away with it; crucify it; crucify it! "The ſins that murdered God ſhall die."

Dear Sir, uſe much private Prayer, and much good will come out of all this. Let us ſtand ſtill, and we ſhall ſee the great ſalvation of God. In the mean time, having our eye ſingle, our intention pure, determined to be on the Lord's ſide.

O how good is God to my ſoul! I do not need *ſin* to humble me. For he breaks me in pieces with his ten thouſand bleſſings. I find a life that never dies; a hidden life above. Neither pain nor eaſe, ſmiles nor frowns, life nor death, can part me from my Love.

I am

I am ſometimes tempted, becauſe I do not labour more with my hands. But O! the thirſt I feel for ſouls! I know not but the Lord lays his hand on my body in mercy, or I ſhould have little time for retirement: for I could be ſpeaking and going about all the day. O Sir, let us make haſte to live!

The Lord grant you the deſire of your ſoul upon me! O that I may be like my ſpotleſs Maſter! The thought makes my heart leap again. This is all I thirſt for, and ſhort of this I will not live. Jeſus has purchaſed all for *me*. Pray help me by your prayers.

O my Father, look up! The chariots and horſe-men of Iſrael! O for faith to lay hold on all the promiſes! Let us pray more than ever, and the Lord will keep us from every ſnare of the devil!

I am your affectionate Child and Servant,

S. R.

LETTER XXVII.

[To the ſame.]

Dear Sir, May 14, 1763.

I Have wrote nothing more concerning *Jenny Cooper*. Nor has ſhe wrote any thing of her laſt ſix months experience, except what may be found in her Letters. I have often wiſhed ſhe had: for during that time ſhe ripened apace. She was favoured with much of the divine preſence; and obeyed that command, "Hear ye him." She attended to the voice of her Shepherd, and her converſation

ſation was in heaven. She lived as one redeemed from the earth, and of all the chriſtians I ever converſed with, I never obſerved ſuch fervent love to all, as I ſaw in her: and in the acquaintance I had with her, particularly the laſt ſix months, I never ſaw any thing that had the appearance of evil.

It is a mercy that we are enjoined to be followers of thoſe who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes. They overcame through the ſtrength of him who loved them, and waſhed them from their ſins in his own blood. And the ſame Lord who is rich in mercy unto all that call upon him, has alſo undertaken our cauſe, and he who has delivered, and doth deliver, will continue to deliver to the end.

I praiſe the Lord I feel peace, and underſtand more fully the love of the Father, in giving his only-begotten Son, that whoever believeth on him may not periſh. Jeſus has truly opened a new and living way into the holieſt. An open door is ſet before us; we may enter in and find paſture. I rejoice in that word, It hath pleaſed the Father that *in him* ſhould all fulneſs dwell, and from his fulneſs we receive grace for grace. O how ſweet a life is the life of faith, which teaches us to depend on Chriſt alone for all we want: which ſaves the ſoul from all confidence in the fleſh, while it enriches and fills it with love, peace, joy, long-ſuffering. It debaſes, empties, and ſinks it into nothing, ſo that all boaſting is excluded. There is hardly any thing ſo bleſt to me as reading the word of God, and ſometimes I think I never believed the Bible till within theſe laſt nine months; every word ſeems ſo ſpoken to my heart; I ſo feel, *All is yours.*

May the Lord abundantly bleſs you, and fill you with all his life and love, I often think that I

do

do not enough love and honour you, or ſee the uſe God makes of you in his vineyard.

I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.

J. C. M.

LETTER XXVIII.

[From the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, to the Rev. Mr. Weſley.]

Philadelphia, Sept. 25, 1764.

Rev. and dear Sir,

YOUR kind Letter, dated in January laſt, through the negligence of thoſe that received the parcel, did not reach me till within theſe few days. It found me at Philadelphia, juſt returned from my Northern Circuit; and waiting only for cooler weather to ſet forwards for Georgia. Perhaps that may be my *Ne plus ultra*. But the Goſpel range is of ſuch large extent, that I have, as it were, ſcarce begun to begin. Surely nothing but a very loud call of Providence could make me ſo much as think of returning to England as yet. I have been mercifully carried through the ſummer's heat; and, had ſtrength permitted, I might have preached to thouſands and thouſands thrice every day. Zealous Miniſters are not ſo rare in this New World as in other parts. Here is room for a hundred Itinerants. Lord Jeſus ſend by whom thou wilt ſend. Fain would I end my life in rambling after thoſe that have rambled away from Jeſus Chriſt.

For

For this let men despise my name,
I'd shun no cross, I'd fear no shame:
All hail reproach!———

I am persuaded you are like minded. I wish you and all your dear Fellow-labourers much prosperity. O to be kept from turning to the right hand or the left! Methinks for many years, we have heard a voice behind us saying, "This is the way, walk in it." I do not repent being a poor, despised, cast out, and now almost worn-out Itinerant. I would do it again if I had my choice. Having loved his own, the altogether lovely Jesus, loves them to the end; even the last glimmerings of an expiring taper, he blessed to guide some wandering souls to himself. At New-England, New-York, and Pennsylvania, the word hath run and been glorified. Scarce one dry meeting since my arrival. All this is of grace. In various places there hath been a very great stirring among the dry bones. If you, and all yours would join in praying over a poor worthless, but willing Pilgrim, it would be a very great act of charity, he being, though less than the least of all,

Rev. and very dear Sir,
Ever yours, &c. &c. in Jesus,
G. WHITEFIELD.

LETTER XXIX.

[From the Rev. Mr. Wesley, to Mrs. S. R.]

My dear Sister, Dublin, April 4, 1758.

O That I could be of some use to you! I long to help you forward in your way. I want to have your

your understanding a mere lamp of light, always shining with light from above! I want you to be full of Divine Knowledge and Wisdom, as Jordan in the time of harvest. I want your words to be full of grace, poured out as precious ointment. I want your every work to bear the stamp of God, to be a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour. Without any part weak, earthly or human: all holy; all divine. The great God, your Father and your Love, bring you to this self-same thing! Begin, Soldier of Christ, Child of God! Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith thou art called! Remember the Faith! Remember the Captain of thy Salvation! Fight! Conquer! Die—and live for ever!

I am yours, &c.

J. W.

LETTER XXX.

[From Mrs. S. R. to the Rev. Mr. Wesley.]

Bristol, March 20, 1758.

Rev. and dear Sir,

FROM the ground of my heart, I thank God and you, for all your tender, fatherly care of my soul and body. I take it as an instance of the love of God to me: what could he do more for me than he has done? The Lord grant I may bring forth much fruit to his glory!

'The things which formerly would have made me fly from him, now make me cleave to him. At present, through the tender mercy of my God, I find my soul loose from all below; and the constant cry of my heart is, "Father, thy will be

done." I often examine, Whether my Affections do not ſtart aſide, to any perſon or thing? But to this hour, (the Lord be praiſed!) I can ſay, to no Creature do I give the Love that belongs to Chriſt. As that was my beſetting ſin, I well underſtand the nature of it. I watch the leaſt occaſion, and were I to find any thing like it, I ſhould give up all pretence of being ſaved from ſin. For if there is a grain, there is a root. And then my abode could not be long here.

I can anſwer the Queſtions you put to me, as before the throne of God. By his power, I do know how to ſteer between extremes, of regarding you too little or too much. As a Miniſter of Chriſt, and my Father and Maſter, I do reverence and love you. Yet if God ſhould ſay, Do not write or converſe any more; if he ſhould ſhew *you* it is not right; I am this moment ready to do his will: it is my meat and drink. If I was not thus free from every creature, I could not enjoy uninterrupted communion with God. I hope my will is brought into entire ſubjection to Chriſt. I find it a great thing to be his Free-man: to be entirely diſengaged from all things here below. With man this is impoſſible: but with God all things are poſſible: ſeeing he has all power in heaven and earth. My heart's deſire and prayer to God is, that I, and all his ſervants, may keep ourſelves from idols. May we always remember, that while we are here below, we are in an enemy's country: that our adverſary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour. If we keep this always in view, and look to the Lord for help, we ſhall, doubtleſs, be more than conquerors through him who hath loved us.

When I thought I ſhould die, I longed to be gone. But when I found I ſhould live, I was reſigned.

ſigned. I had no power to chuſe any thing; but I was often aſhamed before God, for his goodneſs to me: moſt of the time I was much tempted, which ſhewed me the freeneſs of his mercy, and my own unworthineſs.

O how do I thirſt for more holineſs! I believe we ſhall need all the grace that God will give, if he ſend his judgments upon the land. How thankful am I, that I am free. O Eternity, Eternity! What is any thing worth, but a ſingle and a pure heart: which may God give you and me, and all that ſeek him! This is the prayer of,

Yours, &c.

S. R.

LETTER XXXI.

[From Mrs. E. M. to the Rev. Mr. Weſley.]

Rev. and dear Sir, Potto, Nov. 4, 1769.

I Find the greateſt reaſon to adore my dear Redeemer, for his love towards me, who gives me the ſweet experience of the increaſe of his life in my ſoul. I find the Lord always before me; yet by different operations of his ſpirit. I ſee an infinite fulneſs in Jeſus, and feel my heart drawn out with a ſtrong deſire for greater degrees of his love. I ſee myſelf the moſt unworthy, weak, and ignorant of all his creatures. My path is exceeding narrow, and my dangers daily great, yet the Lord is always ſufficient, and I can truſt him at all times. At other times I find my ſpirit loſt in his fulneſs, and ſwallowed up in the ocean of his love. My

ſoul lies in the duſt before him, while I deſire all his creatures to praiſe his name. After ſuch ſtrong conſolations I often find myſelf much aſſaulted with men and devils. In which moments I hear my Saviour whiſper to me, "It is given to thee not only to believe, but to ſuffer for my ſake." I then feel ſuch a patient reſignation of myſelf, and all things, into his hand, that I do not find a wiſh in my heart, but what I can ſacrifice to him, which gives me conſtant happineſs, and a power to rejoice in all things. I often find the greateſt danger in my moſt proſperous moments, both for body and ſoul; at which times the enemy is ſure to whiſper, now take thy eaſe; but I look to Chriſt for ſtrength, to deſpiſe, and fight, and conquer all my enemies. As to my conduct, I deſire to ſhun every appearance of evil, both in word and work. I thank the Lord who ſo keeps me, that I know nothing by myſelf; yet by this I am not juſtified: for I look to be daily plunged into that fountain which is opened for ſin and uncleanneſs; to be waſhed from all my pollution I caſt myſelf entirely upon him, who ſaves me for his own name's ſake, and truſt to be ſwallowed up in his fulneſs every moment, for I know no end thereof.

I am, Rev. and dear Sir, yours, &c.

E. M.

LETTER XXXII.

[Found in the Study of the Rev. Mr. Joſeph Belcher, late of New-England.]

Dear Brother,

YOURS I received, and thought on that queſtion, being *How to live in this World ſo as to live*

live in Heaven? It is one of the common pleas of my heart, which I have often occasion to study, and therefore takes me not unprovided. It is hard to keep the helm up against so many cross winds as we meet withal, upon this sea of fire and glass. That man knows not his own heart that finds it not difficult to break through the entanglements of the world. Creature-smiles stop and entice away the affections from Jesus Christ; creature-frowns encompass and tempestuate the spirit, that it thinks it doth well to be angry. Both ways grace is a loser. We had all need to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. The greatest of your conflicts and causes of complaints, seem to have their original here. Temptations follow tempers. As there are two predominant qualities in the temper of every body, so there are two predominant sins in the temper of every heart. Pride is one in all men in the world——I will tell you, familiarly, what God hath done for my soul, and in what trade my soul keeps towards himself. I am come to a conclusion to look after no great matters in the world but to know Christ and him crucified. I make best way in a low gale: a high spirit and a high sail together will be dangerous, and therefore I prepare to live low. I desire not much: I pray against it. My study is my calling, so much as to tend that without distraction, I am bound to plead for, and more I desire not. By my secluded retirements, I have the advantage to observe, how every day's occasions insensibly wear off the heart from God, and bury it in itself, which they who live in care and lumber cannot be sensible of. I have seemed to see a need of every thing God gives me, and to want nothing that he denies me. There is no dispensation, though afflictive, but either in it or after it, I

find, I could not be without it, whether it be taken from me or not given to me; sooner or later God quiets me in himself without it. I cast all my concerns on the Lord, and live securely on the care and wisdom of my heavenly Father. My ways, you know, are in some sense hedged up with thorns, and grow darker and darker daily: but yet I distrust not my good God in the least, and live more quietly in the absence of all by faith, than I should do, I am persuaded, if I possessed them. I think the Lord deals kindly with me, to make me believe for all my mercies, before I have them, that they will then be Isaacs, sons of laughter: the less reason hath to work upon, the more freely faith casts itself on the faithfulness of God. I find that while faith is steady nothing can disquiet me, and when faith totters nothing can establish me. If I stumble out amongst means and creatures, I am presently lost, and can come to no end: but if I stay myself on God, and leave him to work in his own way and time, I am at rest, and can sit down and sleep in a promise when a thousand rise up against me; therefore my way is, not to cast beforehand, but to work with God by the day: 'Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.' I find so much to do continually with my calling and my heart, that I have no time to puzzle myself with peradventures and futurities: as for the state of the times, it is very gloomy and tempestuous. 'But why do the heathen rage?' Faith lies at anchor in the midst of the waves, and believes the accomplishment of the promise, through all these overturnings, confusions, and seeming impossibilities. Upon this God do I live who is our God for ever, and will guide us to the death. Methinks I lie becalmed in his bosom, as Luther in such a case, I am not much concerned,

let

let Christ see to it. I know prophecies are now dark, and the books are sealed, and men have been deceived, and every cistern fails, yet God doth continue faithful, and faithful is he that hath promised who will do it, I believe these dark times are the womb of a bright morning. Many more things I might have said, but enough.——Oh! Brother, keep close to God, and then you need fear nothing. Maintain secret and intimate communion with God, and then a little of the creature will go a great way. Take time for duties in private, croud not religion into a corner of the day: There is a Dutch proverb, 'Nothing is got by thieving nor lost by praying.' Lay up all your good in God so as to overbalance the sweetness and bitterness of all creatures. Spend no time anxiously in forehand contrivances for this world; they never succeed: God will run his dispensations another way. Self-contrivances are the effects of unbelief. I can speak by experience, would men spend those hours they run out in plots and devices in communion with God, and leave all to him, by venturesome believing, they would have more peace and comfort. I leave you with your God and mine. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit. Pray for your own soul, pray for Jerusalem, and pray hard for your poor brother.

LETTER XXXIII.

My dear Friend,

YOU ask me what I "think are the genuine "properties of an humble man." The question is very important; it deserves a serious consideration, and a full answer. You know I have not the advantages

vantages of age, and long experience, yet nevertheleſs I will tell my friend freely what I think are the marks and properties of one who is humble: and though I will not ſay but humility may diſcover itſelf in other ways, yet I will venture to affirm wherever the following properties are found in any one; he is an humble man.

He forgets not his former ſinfulneſs, and outward meanneſs under the higheſt ſpiritual diſcoveries, or the greateſt advancement in fortune and worldly circumſtances.

He overlooks his own righteouſneſs, and depends intirely upon that which is of God, by faith.

The loweſt and meaneſt good work, is not below him.

He is forward to ſubmit to every truth God has revealed, even thoſe which fleſh and blood are moſt averſe unto.

He lives neither from, nor unto himſelf, but unto and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

He highly prizes the leaſt favour from God, deeming himſelf leſs than the leaſt of all his mercies.

He never thinks himſelf good enough.

He ſmites and chides himſelf for ſmall faults, as for great ones. He quietly bears burdens, and takes affronts without a noiſe.

He labours more to glorify God in afflictions, than to get out of them.

He ſeeks not after great things. He ſays a little will ſatisfy nature, leſs will ſatisfy grace.

He rejoices in the graces, and ſucceſs of others, as well as his own.

He will rather bear an hundred wrongs, than revenge one.

Tho' he may be of the very beſt abilities, he will

will not disdain to be taught by the meanest persons.

He deems himself to have no wisdom to direct, or power to defend himself, without the light and power of grace.

He prefers every one, (that in truth he can) unto himself; thinking *soberly of himself as God has dealt unto him the measure of faith.*

These are some of the properties of an humble-man. And my dear friend, who can forbear admiring the amiable character! who can avoid wishing himself the happy owner of these blessed qualifications? Here give your heart full vent! Let all your soul desire this precious mother Grace. May the good Lord give you an abundant measure thereof; then will your holiness and happiness also, be such as is wished, and heartily prayed for, by

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Brother, and humble Servant.

LETTER XXXIV.

June, 24th, 1766.

I Hope my dear Sister is pressing forward, still going on to perfection. The crown of eternal life is just before you. Jesus saith, *be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* Compared with this, what are all the toys of this life? What are the riches, gain or honours? yea what is life itself? Account it dung, for so it is, compared with Christ. O who would not love such a Saviour! "Jesus all the day long is my joy and my song." My life is hid with Christ in God: And

And when Christ who is my life shall appear, then shall I also appear with him in glory! I cannot express how weak, helpless, and unworthy, I feel myself; yet Jesus careth for me, and helpeth me to cast all my care on him. His love is better than wine! O that he may fill your soul therewith! my dear, contend not about a name, but pray that your soul may be filled with the simple, humble love of Jesus.

I trust dear * * * * is growing in grace likewise, may the Lord make her simple and humble, and fill her with all the mind that is in Christ. Advise her to retire with Jesus, from the multitude: for he is the bridegroom of the soul, and the chiefest among ten thousand: that he would ever look on us, may give occasion to our crying out, Why me, Why me? O amazing depth of Love divine!

Lost in wonder gaze no more,
Fall and silently adore!
Peace be with your spirit.

I am your affectionate Sister.

LETTER XXXV.

My dear Sister,

ON Tuesday last I received yours, and do greatly rejoice that you desire to partake of that holiness, without which you cannot see the Lord with comfort. O that you may ever account all things but dung, that you may thus win Christ! Hold fast the beginning of your confidence stedfast unto the end; forgetting the things behind, reach forth to those before. It hath never entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things God hath pre-

pared for them that love him. But thus much you can conceive, that they are far, incomparably far superior to all earthly blessings. O that your heart and mine may be abundantly more sensible of their worth!

I find daily need to pray unto the Lord, to give me a deeper sense of the greatness of his mercies towards me, and of my utter unworthiness of the least of them. Accordingly I find my blessed Lord Jesus, doth answer my prayers. I know not how to declare his goodness! Let silence speak his praise! Meet me my dear love, at the throne of grace at ten in the forenoon, our Jesus will certainly meet us both, and all our friends who will join with us. I shall be glad to see you all, when Providence makes my way plain.

I am your affectionate Sister.

LETTER XXXVI.

My dear, Nov. 22d. 1758.

PRAISE God for what he hath already done: let those give thanks, whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered, from the hand of the enemy: but you know a greater deliverance is at hand. What have you to do, but to fight your way through against the world, the flesh, and the devil? It is a good, though painful fight. Unless you yield, you cannot but conquer. It is true, you will first conquer by little and little: for "more of his life and more you have, as the old Adam dies." But there is also an instantaneous conquest: In a moment sin shall be no more. You are gradually dying for a long time: but you will die in a moment.

ment. O haſten to that happy time! Pray ſtrive and hope for it.

I am your affectionate Brother, &c.

LETTER XXXVI.

My very dear Friend, Dec. 1ſt, 1761.

I Am by the kind and indulgent Providence of God, got ſafe from the * * * * . And at my return, to heighten my joy, I met with your kind and chriſtian epiſtle. I heartily thank you for the undeſerved favour of making me welcome to your houſe, and attendance: but my dear Friend, how will my place be filled up and lack of ſervices ſupplied? There is a very large harveſt and but few labourers: and beſides bad as I am, I am not quite bad enough yet to be laid up in the harbour. I muſt take ſeveral voyages to ſea, and endure many a ſtorm yet, and when I am quite unfit for the ocean, I hope God will provide for me ſome ſuch haven as you kindly offer, until he takes me up to the place of everlaſting reſt. Mean time I am unfeignedly deſirous, and do often fervently pray, that I may be guided by an unerring Pilot, that I may neither daſh againſt the Rocks, nor founder on the Sands, but (though ſhattered and weather beaten, and ſadly impaired in my rigging) be full fraught with all the treaſures of Heaven, that ſuch a crazy veſſel can hold, when I creep into the creek of privacy, to converſe with *him whom my ſoul loveth* the reſidue of my uſeleſs days.

If you find that thinking on ſo worthleſs, and inſignificant a creature, raiſes your mind to Jeſus Chriſt, or if you wreſtle with God for me, your

thoughts

thoughts will anſwer very valuable purpoſes; otherwiſe, if you ſaw all the weakneſſes and folly which attend me, in the ſame diſagreeable light I ſee them myſelf, you would never think of me, without pity and commiſeration.

I have had a very evident proof lately, that the Lord Jehovah reigneth, and doth what ever ſeemeth good in his ſight: one would have thought that the doctrine which we preach would have met with a very cold reception in the place where I have been, and of conſequence the Preacher of it the ſame, but, contrary to human probability quite the reverſe has happened unto us both. The doctrine diſtilled as the dew, and ſunk into many hearts; while many are enquiring *what ſhall we do to be ſaved?* ſome are ſaying what ſhall we do to be more abundantly holy? Bleſſed enquiries! ſurely the Lord will ſave, viz. juſtify the penitents, and give more, yea, fill them with righteouſneſs, who *hunger and thirſt* for it.

My own ſoul has often been watered from the inexhauſtible fountain: but along with theſe happy times of refreſhment from the Lord's preſence, I have had many ſevere trials, and aſſaults from the enemy of my own ſoul; but I believe that all his malice ſhall devolve upon himſelf, and only make me more cautious, and awaken in my heart a more implacable reſentment, and laſting indignation to him, and all his wicked ways. Let me have an intereſt in your neareſt approaches to your Redeemer, and I hope I ſhall not ſin againſt God in forgetting to pray for you: while I remain, Your ever affectionate Brother

and inviolable Friend.

LETTER XXXVII.

My dear Friend, June 23d, 1760.

I Was juſt ready to think you had ſlighted me in not anſwering mine, when your acceptable epiſtle came to hand, and happily prevented ſuch a ſurmiſe.

It gives me great pleaſure to hear from my friends, whom I love: but the accounts you gave of yourſelf, gave me more than ordinary ſatisfaction. When you can leave all unto the Lord's diſpoſal, doing your duty, you are certainly ſafe and happy. Reſignation to the will of God is a bleſſed grace. The ſure way to hell, is to follow our own will; but the ſure way to Heaven, is to follow the will of God in all things. Our dear Redeemer ſays unto all his followers, *learn of me for I am meek, and lowly in heart, and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls.* But we cannot learn this excellent leſſon without making his will our law at all times. We ſhould labour daily to die more and more to ſenſe, and all ſenſible objects and enjoyments, retiring more into ourſelves into the centre of our ſouls, and there worſhip God who dwelleth in us, in ſpirit and truth. I know, my dear, you cannot have much outward ſolitude, and therefore you have more need of inward retirement, and recollection, that the hurry of buſineſs and company may not hinder your inward prayer, and mental worſhip of God. While your external ſenſes are attentive unto, and employed about the affairs of your ſtation, let your ſoul attend to an indwelling God, and always hear him

ſpeak

ſpeak unto you. Then it will participate more and more of the divine nature, and feel the moſt ſenſible enjoyment of the divine preſence: And as this will be extremly delightful, ſo it will be morally perfecting above any thing elſe.

The laſt week but one, the Lord gave me opportunity to learn obedience by the things which I ſuffered; the laſt, he gave more health, and much of his loving, ſweet, and powerful preſence. Theſe are the two ways he hath of purifying ſouls to himſelf; by the fire of affliction, and inward burning, and by the fire of divine love. The latter is more pleaſant, but the former is more like the way in which he led his beloved Son: But it is not for us to chuſe, let the Lord lead us in which way he willeth.

My dear Friend, aim at all that height of holineſs which Chriſt hath purchaſed for, and promiſed to beſtow upon you. The dear Lord will bleſs you, if you uſe that grace you have already received. I hope to keep you company in the heavenly journey. I am reſolved through the grace of God that nothing ſhall hinder me. I long for all the fulneſs of God.

" Oh! what is virtue, why had I,
" Who am low, a taſte ſo high?

Sure that God which has inſpired this deſire, will alſo fulfil it, in my poor heart, and in my friend's. When you are favoured with free acceſs to the King of King's, think of, and ſpeak for him, who is unalterably,

your faithful Friend, and humble Servant.

LETTER XXXVIII.

My dear Friend, April 19, 1760.

I Have often thought of you ſince I left you, and it may be, you have not always forgot your unworthy Friend: Though I do not deſerve to be thought of, nor mentioned, I rather indeed deſire,

" To be little, and unknown,
" Lov'd and priz'd by God alone."

I always conſider myſelf, either kneeling before my Saviour as a ſubject before his prince, or ſtanding in his preſence, as a ſervant before his maſter, that I may hear what my King will grant of his princely beneficence, or what he will command as a maſter. His gifts are many, and great, and his commands are dearer to me than thouſands of gold and ſilver. Sometimes I feel all my ſoul carried up unto, and fixed in God, as in its proper centre and place of reſt, without much care or effort of my own, then all earthly things diſappear, and all their reliſh, while all my heart is filled with love, and tears of joy ſtreams down my face. Then nothing is diſagreeable but the thoughts of returning again into this world. Oh! who can explain the bleſſedneſs of theſe moments of abſtraction! it is the beginning of celeſtial happineſs, an anticipation of that exceeding and eternal weight of glory reſerved in heaven for thoſe who love the appearing of Chriſt. At other times I come down a little from this ſupreme height of

joy

joy and there seems comparatively some distance between my beloved and my soul, then it spends itself in strong desire, and never ceaseth pleading, till I lean again on my Redeemer's breast.

I constantly desire to do and suffer something for my Lord; but alas! I am not able, without his help, to bear one cross, withstand one temptation, nor do one good work, so that he must give what he commands, and then I say "Command what thou wilt and it shall be done."

I imagine my friend to be growing in grace, and in the knowledge of God daily, I hope I have not thought amiss. Tell me, my dear*** *When saw you him whom my soul loveth? Do you go forth and grow up as a calf of the stall?* Is there more melody in your soul, from the sweet Turtle's voice that entertains your ears in the neighbouring groves, than from the inhabitants of the burgh? I conceive you answer, yes. But this is an unsatisfactory conjecture: put me out of suspense, as soon as you receive this, and be assured I am,

Your affectionate Brother, &c.

LETTER XXXIX.

My very dear Friend, May 12, 1760.

I Received your kind, and Christian Letter from the hand of my good Friend ***. It gave me joy to hear from you, and more especially so, in that it brought me intelligence of your spiritual prosperity, which answers my desires and prayers. As I have made mention of you in my supplications to God, so I shall now have more abundant occasion to thank him on your account.

As you obſerve it is an inſeparable property of grace, always to excite our thirſt for more. When our Lord ſaid, "He that drinketh of the water which I ſhall give, ſhall thirſt no more," He meant he ſhall not any more inordinately deſire the periſhable things of time and ſenſe. But whoſoever drinketh of that bleſſed life-giving water, ſhall ever ſay,

"Inſatiate to the ſpring I fly,
I drink, and yet am ever dry:
Ah! who againſt ſuch charms is proof,
Ah! who that loves, can love enough!"

Accordingly, they who have the largeſt and fulleſt communications of his divine goodneſs, and bleſſed preſence, ſee, and feel moſt of their own littleneſs, helpleſſneſs, and unworthineſs, and ſo do ever cry,

"I loath myſelf when God I ſee,
And into nothing fall;
Content if thou exalted be,
And Chriſt is all in all."

I believe you have now learnt the happy art of devoting all you do to God, by a pure and ſingle intention: and therefore continue in the ſervice and worſhip of your Saviour, even when you are diſcharging the duties of your ſtation, as when you are more immediately employed in devotional exerciſes. Yet nevertheleſs, get every moment you poſſibly can from your buſineſs to ſpend in private; for this is for ingathering, the other for expending. Privacy is for exerciſing more immediately the graces of prayer, love and thankfulneſs, and enjoying the cloſeſt communion with the dear

object

object of your affections; and the incumbrance of buſineſs, for employing faith, patience, watchfulneſs, ſelf-denial, and reſignation, which are as neceſſary in their place, and altogether as acceptable to God as the other. In both let this be your motto, *Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.*

Your not having at all times the ſame degree of joy, may be accounted for, from the alternate exerciſe of the graces above. It is doubtleſs more joyous to commune with God in ſecret than to be more immediately employed in watchfulneſs, and ſelf-denial among a multitude. But it is an unſpeakable bleſſing, and comfort, that in both circumſtances, God ſtands in one relation unto you, even that ſweet and endearing one of a father.

I thank God I am yet in the number of the living, whoſe names are written in Jeruſalem, and my life is hid with Chriſt in God. I have had a tolerable ſtate of health; how the report of my death was ſpread, I cannot tell: but had it been true, it would have been my unſpeakable gain; and it will, (Oh! bleſſed proſpect) be true e'er long! Lord haſten the deſirable period! Mean time let us in patience poſſeſs our ſouls; and live by the day, the hour, yea the moment with God, not knowing what may be on the morrow: always ſtanding prepared for that laſt and beſt ſcene of human life. When our ſpirits ſhall ſtand upon our quivering lips, ready to launch out into an untried eternity. May they publiſh as they fly, *the blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin.*

I am inviolably yours, &c.

LETTER XL.

My Dear, Nov. 3, 1760.

I Received your kind and welcome letter, I give you hearty thanks for your love unto and care of me: I ſhall always think it my duty, and an addition to my happineſs, if I ſhall ſo behave as to deſerve the continuation of your favour. I think the leaſt I can do, will be to give you love for love.

The deſign of our correſpondence being improvement, in the divine life, what will be moſt to the uſe of edifying, will therefore be moſt agreeable to our intention, and I know it will be moſt pleaſing to my friend. I have thought ſometimes that nothing is more likely to obſtruct or hinder our riſing higher into the life and love of God, than too great activity of thought, or too liberal uſe of the imaginary powers. The enemy it may be has the greateſt acceſs unto us at this avenue, and has moſt command of this faculty. If the things are quite innocent about which we think, yet that ſilence may be diſturbed in which the ſoul ought, with compoſed recollection, to wait for the manifeſtation of the love of God: unreſtrained excurſions of the imagination, keep the ſoul too much in action, unfit it for thoſe divine impreſſions, which ſeldom come down but when the ſpirit is profoundly calm and ſilent. Seeing then there is ſo great loſs in indulging our imagination, even on theſe innocent ſubjects, we ſhall find it very requiſite often to ceaſe from thoſe thoughts which are only the images of external things and extend not to ſpiritual objects. This practice excludes not that thinking which is natural

ral to the ſoul, nor that general, conſtant ſight, and apprehenſion which it has of God.

It is certainly of great uſe in the divine life to retire from the irregular workings of our fancy, into that ſilent awe that dares not move before the Almighty: this fits the ſoul for divine inlightenings, and ſpiritual embraces; for the more quiet we are, the leſs reſiſtance we make to any ſupernatural impreſſion; and the eaſier we perceive the beginnings of divine attraction, and ſo yield ourſelves unto it. When the ſoul hath attained the power, frequently to throw itſelf into this ſilent ſtate, (which power muſt be attained by habitual practice,) it will then come to clearer internal manifeſtations, and intellectual ſights of the inviſible world: many times receiving quickening glances from eternity, with thoſe ſtrong infuſions of love, which often bring the ſoul into a rapture. The enjoyments of this ſtate fully recompence the ſelf-denial neceſſary in the attaining it.

Again, in this recollected and ſilent waiting on God, we come more fully to perceive the true ground of our union and oneneſs with all the children of our heavenly father; and the reaſon of our having more cloſe and intimate communion with ſome, than others. The general ground of the union of ſaints, is that likeneſs which they have one to another, being all partakers of one, even a divine nature, and being caſt all into one mould, by one ſpirit actuating them. The reaſon of ſpecial communion with ſome more than others, is, 1ſt. By being begotten unto the divine life by one inſtrument. Had we lived among the primitive chriſtians, we ſhould have ſeen ſomething of this: thoſe who were brought to the knowledge of God by St. Paul, had a peculiar endearment to him, and to one another; and ſo, no doubt, it was with

with thoſe who were converted by Apolſos, Cephas, and others. But even among theſe we ſhall find ſome, who are ſtill more particularly endeared to each other. The reaſon of this is, 2dly, Their having an agreement in their natural diſpoſitions. It is not improbable, that this was the reaſon of our Saviour's peculiar union with St. John. The whole bulk of believers are called the body of Chriſt; now as in the natural body, ſome bones are joined unto, and locked in one another in a peculiar manner; ſo in the myſtical body of Chriſt, ſome of the living members are united, and their ſpirits locked, or mingled in one another, as they all are not. This flows from the ſuperior harmony, and ſingular agreement of their nature and ſpirit. Grace does not deſtroy our natural diſpoſitions, but rectifies them by that heavenly principle, which reduceth our ſpirits unto the higheſt perfection, by bringing them to their primary model and frame. The more alſo we ariſe above the animal life, into the divine, and the nearer we are both to God and one another; the fitter inſtruments we become to convey the pure ſtreams of the heavenly life, with whom we are ſo united.

My ſubject having detained me ſo long, I have not time to ſay any thing reſpecting myſelf; but that I feel ſomething of this happy union with you, and heartily deſire to improve it. Believe that I love, think of, and pray for you. I hope I ſhall ſee you once again here, or elſe hereafter for ever.

I am unalterably your's, &c.

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LETTER XLI.

My dear Brother, Oct. 17th, 1760.

THE christian union and fellowship I have often found with you, does not depend upon local situation, but can subsist even when the subjects of it are remote from each other. Though I am now absent from you in person, I am intimately near you in spirit, rejoicing to think of your union with, and enjoyment of Christ Jesus. I hope my dear friend stands fast in that blessed liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free, and is not in any measure entangled again with the yoke of bondage. O prize liberty! Often think, now you have grace, how miserable you was wont to be without it. Only desire one thing on earth, to make your calling and election sure. Be a man of one business, and intention. Let Christ be all in all unto you: let him be your bread to feed you, and your wine to chear you: your sun to warm and enlighten you, and your shield to defend you: your rock to stand upon, and your hiding place from the wind: the source of your happiness, the centre of your spirit, and the object of your undivided affections. Let heaven be full in your eye, Christ in your heart, and the world, (where it should be) under your feet. Be a companion of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, in your contemplations; a friend to christians in your conversation, and an imitator of the lovely Jesus in all your tempers. Be covetous of grace, ambitious of glory, and voluptuous in spiritual enjoyments. Be timorous of yourself, fearless of men

and

and devils, and undaunted in faith. Be little in your own eyes, high in the favour of the saints, and great in the esteem of God. Be so great an enthusiast as to prize an infelt Christ, and so weak and silly as to seek all your happiness in God: though in your own esteem environed with involuntary infirmities, yet in the eyes of your spectators unreproveable. Such as none but devils and wicked men can hate, as none but envious and malicious creatures can malign, and as God, angels, and good men will never fail to love. Be an incarnate angel, a living instructor, and a friend of God. In a word, be a pilgrim on earth, a free man of the new Jerusalem, and a candidate for the highest glory in heaven.

You may easily perceive that I have a singular respect for you, in that I would have you singularly good: and that I may contribute all I can toward it, I intend through the grace of God, to help you by my prayers, and animate you by my example. God forbid that I should recommend any thing to you, which I do not purpose to practice myself. The dear Lord Jesus help me to love his name, and people, and service, abundantly more than I ever did. Ruth's behaviour to Naomi her mother, shall be my conduct to Christ Jesus, I say unto him, "I will not leave thee, nor return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Though death might part Ruth and her mother for a time, yet even that shall, (I steadfastly believe) be a means of bringing me more immediately into the presence and enjoyment of him whom my soul loveth. The Lord make his face to shine continually upon the head, and heart, of my dear, dear friend; and give him

peace

peace in this life, and everlasting joy in that which is to come.

I am, &c.

LETTER XLII.

My very dear Brother,

GRACE, mercy, and peace be multiplied upon you from God even our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ. I have often thought of you since I saw you, and have also made mention of you in my prayers to God. I believe the Lord Jesus will abundantly bless you, if you ask enough, and waver not. You have exceeding great reason to thank God for what he hath already done, and as great encouragement to expect more. What a blessing it is, you were not lost among the rich ones of the earth, but are saved among the tents of Judah. What shall I say to induce my dear friend to be thankful? Ponder the loving kindnesses, and tender mercies of God in your heart. Think, O! think, what scenes of mercies have, interspersed shall I say? Nay: have filled, in one uninterrupted succession, your whole life! Let your heart, your lips, your hands move only to his praise. Think meanly of yourself, and that every thing God does for you, is infinitely more than you deserve. When you do good, and the subjects of your beneficence are unthankful, or even make ungrateful, or unkind returns, commend the deed, and them unto God, who judgeth righteously, and who will not be unfaithful to forget your labour of love. Pray to Jesus to discover all the subtle, and secret workings of pride, self-will,

and unbelief, that may yet remain in your ſoul. Let not the leaſt uncharitableneſs have any place in your heart; no not even toward your worſt enemies. Be much in the exerciſe of love to God, and all men; and in reſignation to the will of God. If men ſpeak evil of you, you are never the worſe; or if they commend you, you are never the better. We are no more, or leſs, than we are before God, always conſider yourſelf ſtanding before him, as a ſtone before the carver, entreating him to make of you his holy image.

Beware of the world. Be ſuſpicious that it is intending to do you miſchief, in one reſpect or other, if it poſſibly can: and therefore ſtand prepared, and fortified againſt it, as you would againſt a formidable enemy.

I thank God I have had ſometimes pain, and ſometimes eaſe, ſince I left ***. I am in the arms of Chriſt: He putteth his right hand beneath me, and his left hand embraceth me. I love him, and will not go from him.

I cry, "'Tis hell from thee to part;
"Preſs me cloſer to thy heart."

I ſhall be glad to ſee you again. Oh! that we may meet improved in grace. The good will of him, who dwelt in the buſh, and who accompanied the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, preſerve and bleſs you for ever.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

My very dear Friend, Oct. 6, 1760.

AFTER my usual morning exercise, I am now set down with a design to appropriate some portion of my time to the agreeable employment of writing to my friend, whom I dearly love, and highly esteem. Who knows the powerful effects of christian friendship? The love which forms it, is stronger than death, *many waters cannot quench it:* It's flame ascends toward heaven, nor can it be confined by time, or space. How valuable is a faithful friend?

" The friendless owner of a world is poor;
" The world in purchase of a friend is gain."

I acknowledge myself indebted unto the kind providence of God, which first afforded me the benefit of your acquaintance, in which I find a real pleasure. But if our friendship affords such joys on earth, where many things occur to interrupt, and imbitter it; what delight will it excite in heaven, where all things tend to further and improve it? And may not this lead our thoughts a step higher? What is the friendship subsisting between created beings, compared with that fellowship which we have with the glorious Redeemer? The latter as much exceeds the former, as the meridian sun outshines the stars; for as they borrow all their lustre from the sun, so the friendship of christians derives its being from their union with Christ. Without this it would have its foundation in selfish principles, and carnal affections, and

its end in worldly conſequences: The motives unto it could be no higher than the low things appertaining to the preſent time, ſuch as beauty, gain, or pleaſure; and it would of conſequence ebb and flow, as they had, or had not, a good aſpect upon it. Whereas the friendſhip of true believers is founded on the infinite love of God, fixed upon an immoveable baſis, the ſimilitude of their ſouls; and conducted by inviolable integrity, to the end of mutual edification. It is not bound by time, nor ſubject to decay: firm, and laſting as its foundation, the love of God. It is kindled in holy ſouls by the breath of God, and preſerved in life and vigour by the ſame, and ſo of the moſt noble, and excellent nature. A celeſtial plant growing on earth. The ſoil is indeed too barren, and the climate too cold, for its arriving at full maturity; but e'er long it will have its entire conſummation, and perfect completion, in the heavenly ſoil, in the blaze of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and in the climate of immortality. It is not dependant on the caprice and uncertainty of outward circumſtances, and a local ſituation. There are now many high mountains, broad rivers, and extended plains between us, but they are unable to ſtop the flight of our ſpirits, or prevent their mingling with each other. Oh! that our ſouls may cleave more cloſely to the dear Lord Jeſus, and in him to one another.

If I might be permitted to ſuggeſt any thing by way of advice, I would ſay, read the beſt books, keep the beſt company, and hear the beſt preachers you poſſibly can. Secure God for your Father, his children for your companions, and heaven for your portion. Let your heart be full of Chriſt, your converſation ſeaſoned with grace, and your eye ſtedfaſtly fixed on eternal glory. Let this

world

world be considered as an inn, holiness your highway, and the new Jerusalem above, the end of your journey. Receive all, and do all the good you can while you have opportunity. Be a stranger on earth, of the household of faith, and an expectant of the kingdom of God. I pray God you may be a plant of renown, a polish'd shaft in his quiver, and a vessel unto honour. May you be the favourite of God's throne, and the delight and pleasure of his soul. In short, may you be Christ's follower on earth, his witness in judgment, and a sharer of his glory in eternity.

With regard to myself, my health is but poor, my body weak, and my strength little. My soul is dependant on Christ Jesus, loaths the world, thirsts for more righteousness, and longs for it's everlasting home. My aim is, the highest degree of holiness on earth, and the seat which is nearest to Christ in glory. Ambitious creature! Yet I believe I have one above me in this blessed ambition; however I will follow hard after you, as you follow after Christ, while I remain, your inviolable Friend, &c.

LETTER XLIV.

My dear Friend, April 20th, 1760.

I Know nothing will give you greater satisfaction, than to hear of the success of the Gospel among the helpless sons of men. And though I know you to be far from that credulity, which receives every report, yet you are too well acquainted with the sovereignty, and unlimited prerogative of God, who giveth account to none of his ways, nor is confined to one measure of dealing

with his creatures; to reject every thing as enthusiasm, cant, or delusion, merely for having some extraordinary and uncommon circumstances attending it. You know well that the divine Being hath his ways in the whirlwind, and his footsteps in the great deep, where we cannot trace them, and is as unconfined in his beneficence and grace, as in his might and power. If therefore what I am going to relate, bears the essential marks of his grace and goodness, and is consonant to his promises, we need not fear an unpardonable provocation in ascribing it unto him; but on the other hand, we may justly fear the worst of crimes, and the greatest of punishments will be the consequence of our slighting, or especially ascribing unto another cause, what is so worthy of God.

About the middle of last month, a few honest people in a neighbouring town met together, as they had often done before, upon a religious occasion, to improve their acquaintance with their Redeemer, and (using all diligence) *to make their calling and election sure.* God who always countenances every well designed undertaking, and never fails to meet with his people in the way of his mercy, when they are found in the way of their duty, was present in a very remarkable manner, where these two or three were assembled together. They began their blessed exercise with singing an hymn, and in joining their fervent petitions, and offering them to the throne of grace, which is always easy of access to every faithful approacher. After deep recollection, complaints of the depravity of their nature, and their deep revolt from God, with intermingled thankfulness for their free justification through faith in Christ, broke the solemn silence. Convincing light from heaven shone upon their minds, and discovered at once,

once, both the present defects and impurities of their hearts, and the necessity of their being *cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*, and of *their perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* Though an astonishing sight of indwelling sin, made them tremble, yet moved by an internal principle of grace, and the sacred influence of the Holy Ghost; and encouraged by the great and precious promises of God; through the mouth of one, they poured the full stream of their desires, in the attentive ear of their compassionate Redeemer.

And he who hath said, *ask and ye shall receive*, was present, and faithful to fulfil his promise. Upon the occurrence of these words in prayer, "Thou "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, hear for "the sake of thy Son, Jesus Christ," one said, (unable to confine the joy he felt, in his own breast) "Blessed be the Lord God for ever, and ever more, for he hath cleansed my heart! *Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name!*" More like an inhabitant of heaven, than earth, he cried "Glory, Glory! Glory! be to God, he hath *cleansed me from all unrighteousness!*"

Another, being in agony of prayer, spoke to this purpose. "I hold thee with a trembling hand, but will not let thee go: I see by an eye of faith, my Saviour turn to his Father, to his God, and my God! Now he turns his face to me!" &c. And in a little time he burst out in the same exstacy of joy and praise, as the former, saying; "Blessed be the Lord for evermore, he hath cleansed my heart!" Repeating the same many times over.

A third was heard to say, "To my own appre-"hension, I am hanging over the pit of hell by "a slender thread;" while another cried with a loud

loud and dismal cry: "I am in hell! I am in hell! "Save me! Save me, or I perish."

A fifth was quite differently affected, and with a voice full of melody, a countenance full of joy, and a heart full of happiness, cried "Glory be to "God for evermore, for he hath pardoned all "my sins!"

This continued for the space of two hours, some praising, extolling and magnifying God, in more exalted devotion than is common to the present state of things: others praying to their Creator and Saviour with unusual earnestness and fervour. Some in the simplicity and warmth of their hearts said, as is natural for persons in such circumstances, "O that my husband, O that my children had been here to night! Others, O that my wife, O that my friends, O that all the town had been here to night!" This was a time indeed of refreshing from the presence of the Lord: (To compare little things with great) A second Pentecost.

If all the world our Saviour knew,
Sure all the world would love and praise him too!

The night following, the same persons assembled together again, and the power of the Lord was present to heal the wounded, to comfort the disconsolate, and to deliver those which were bound. As the God of all grace, whose mercies are new every morning, and repeated every evening, had greatly purified and enlarged the hearts of three the proceeding night, so he did the same for three more this night, and unto one he gave the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of his sins. Lord how wonderous are thy blessings, how stupenduous are thy works! Here we may say with as great propriety and with far greater wonder, than when we view the works of the creation:

"These

" Theſe are thy works parent of good:" You may eaſily perceive that notwithſtanding my natural prejudice, (unto which you are not a ſtranger) againſt every thing which has the appearance of diſorder, or is in the leaſt irrational; this has *baffled my carnal wiſdom*, and fully gained the approbation of my faithleſs mind. It would do my dear friend good to ſee what a ſurpriſing change there is in the tempers and converſation of theſe highly favoured people. You cannot converſe with them, but (if invincible prejudice prevents it not) you feel all your ſpirit exhilerated and your ſoul glowing with heavenly ardor, every grace quickened and all your powers ſtrongly gravitating to the God of your ſalvation. The humility and meekneſs, the ſeriouſneſs and gravity, the love and gentleneſs, which you diſcover in their artleſs behaviour, come with greater energy, and much better recommended to your conquered heart, than all that the moſt able orators can ſay from the pulpit, upon theſe graces. You are conſtrained to acknowledge *that God is with them of a truth.*

I have already tranſgreſſed the uſual limits of a letter, and treſpaſſed upon my friend's patience, but I yet beg his indulgence, while I offer my hearty petitions to almighty God, in behalf of my friend and myſelf, for theſe divine favours.

" O! thou author of being, and of all bleſſed-
" neſs! Thou inexhauſtible treaſure of goodneſs!
" Who didſt create man in thine own bleſſed
" image, and likeneſs, and has given us indubita-
" ble proofs of thy willingneſs, yea deſire that we
" ſhould be recovered unto our unſinning ſtate; and
" who, for the ſame, haſt made the moſt ample pro-
" viſion, in thy well beloved Son Jeſus Chriſt;
" look upon thy helpleſs ſervants, and for the
" ſake of him in whom thou declareſt thyſelf well
" pleaſed, fulfil in us all that which thy own ſelf
intendeſt,

" intendeſt, in the great and precious promiſes,
" thou haſt made unto us, and all who believe.
" Circumciſe theſe hearts to love thee, with all
" our heart, and ſoul, and mind. From all our
" idols, and from all our filthineſs, good Lord
" do thou deliver us, and for the glory of thy
" great name, let thy Son's precious blood *cleanſe*
" *us from all ſin*; that there may be no occaſion
" of ſtumbling in us, that the diſciple may be as
" his maſter, and that we may perfect holineſs in
" thy fear, that ſo we may be part of that church
" for which our dear Redeemer gave himſelf, that
" he might preſent it unto himſelf, a glorious
" church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any
" ſuch thing; but that it ſhould be holy, and with-
" out blemiſh; and we being as he is, even in
" this world, may, with all his ſanctified ſons and
" daughters, be exalted unto his throne, and
" enjoy everlaſting bleſſedneſs in his preſence.
" Amen. I am

Your inviolable Friend in Chriſt Jeſus.

LETTER XLV.

Dear Brother, Dec. 10th. 1760.

YOUR profitable letter found me ill in a fever, from a violent cold. The ſtate of my mind was exactly as you deſcribed. With amazement I cried out, ſurely theſe are the cauſes of my complaint! I immediately endeavoured to reduce your advice to practice: And what was the effect? O bleſſed be God, I know not how, or where to begin to tell you! My burdened mind got free, as a bird out of a ſnare: My cares were caſt on my ever faithful Lord; my ſoul was ſtayed on him who is

God

God over all, bleſſed for evermore. My freed and enlarged heart, enjoyed his ſweet, and precious peace. This ſtate I have been in ever ſince, my happineſs increaſing daily more and more. Bleſſed be my adorable Redeemer, I have nothing to complain of; all is glory, happineſs, and heaven! I have neither fear, nor care but how I may live unblameably in the preſence of my Beloved. Now I every moment find, not only union, but communion alſo, with the Father, and the Son, through the Holy Spirit. I am ſo elevated that I forget to eat my neceſſary food: Even now while I am writing, my ſoul is expanded to graſp the infinite. O if we were now together, how ſhould we extol, adore, and praiſe our ever living, and ever loving Jeſus! But alas! how barren is human language, let ſilence ſpeak his praiſe.

How my dear Lord will deal with me, or diſpoſe of me for the future, I know not, but I ſay,

" Jeſus, I come thy will to do,
" I come thy will to ſuffer too."

But for this I have need of all the light and ſtrength, and wiſdom God will give me. O help me, help me all you can: Do not with-hold from me any advice which you believe will be uſeful to me. I find retirement, ſolitude, and ſtillneſs to be very helpful, and now, (I thank God) I have better opportunity for the ſame than uſual.

But while I ſpeak of the goodneſs of God, how ſhall I deſcribe my own helpleſſneſs, ignorance, weakneſs, and infirmity! I cannot deſcribe it, but you can tell a little, by what you feel in yourſelf. I am loſt in thought! how can it be, that ſuch infinite wiſdom, goodneſs, love, mercy, and power, can join themſelves, to ſuch vileneſs and poverty!

poverty! Angels cannot tell! O my ſoul be content to feel, and enjoy, and ſay was ever love like thine! Let me hear how Jeſus deals with your ſoul.

I am your affectionate Friend, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

My dear Friend, May 11th, 1760.

I Now think it very long ſince I heard from my dear Friend, I hope it will not be much longer before I ſee you; then ſhall we be able to ſtrengthen each others hands in God. By this time, I truſt, the ſtorms are pretty well over, and that you had comfortable meetings with Mr. C——, at your own houſe. I ſet you a few lines by him.

Do you ſtill outride all your trials? Do you grow more holy every day, by every thing you meet with? You will ſoon be harboured in eternal reſt. I ſhould be glad to have your underſtanding a lamp of divine light, your ſoul full of ſpiritual wiſdom, and knowledge, as Jordan of water, in the time of harveſt: I would have all your words to be full of grace, as ointment poured forth; and all you are, a ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour, without any part weak, earthly, or carnal. O may your Saviour, and your love, bring you to this ſelf ſame thing Rejoice, ſoldier of Chriſt! child of God! walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. Remember the captain of your ſalvation. Fight! conquer! die, and live for ever! What you ſaid was made a great bleſſing to my ſoul, for this is what I long for, this is indeed being as a city ſet upon a hill, and giving light to all about it. But O what weakneſs do I find!

yet

Yet God is my ſtrength: he enables me to go on day by day; living upon him, and looking up unto him. I have been tried ſince I came here, by God, men, and devils; through all I cry, *Thy will be done.* O my dear friend, it is well there is a day coming, that will make amends for all. While we look to the captain of our ſalvation, we need not fear what men can do, or ſay unto us. Pray for me, I have need thereof, having a weak body and ſoul; but my ſure truſt is in the God of ſtrength, and power. Give my love to all friends, accept the ſame yourſelf,

From your affectionate Siſter, &c.

LETTER XLVII.

My Dear, March 28th, 1760.

I Expected to hear from you much ſooner than I did, however your letter was welcome when it came: you have greatly the advantage of me, you always know where I am, but I do not know where you are; yet nothing can part us but ſin, and ſurely that ſhall never do it. Since I heard laſt from you, I have been very ill in body, and much tempted and grieved in ſpirit. I often look with longing eyes to my FATHER's houſe, and groan to be cloathed upon with my houſe from heaven: Yet I can always ſay, My dear Father, *Thy will be done.* I find I am more an inhabitant of heaven than earth; few underſtand me, or are willing ſo to do; however I am determined to ſtand or fall with Jeſus, and not with the multitude. He is the life of my life, and the ſoul of my ſoul; I find ſuch a friend in him, as my tongue cannot expreſs.

O my dear friend, I bear the burden of the Lord; I am pained to see so few willing to be conformed to Jesus. One is of Paul, another of Apollos, and another of Cephas, but who of Christ? how many make their religion to consist in outward things? how true is that parable of the sower! only one sort of ground brought forth fruit, though four received the seed of the kingdom. These things, with many more, are the causes of my trouble daily. But what shall I do? labour to live to God (in a wicked world) in heart, and in all my conversation, and be ready to hear that welcome word, *arise, my love, and come away.* My soul at present, rests in God, and daily labours to be approved of him: in all I do, I look to him alone, I live on him alone, and I live to him alone, and so am happy in him alone. This is the present state of my mind. Jesus loves me, he tries, and proves me, and leads me a way I know not: but it is enough that I remain in the Lord's hands, as clay in the hands of the Potter. As to the sight I have of myself, words cannot express: how weak, how feeble, how poor, how helpless, how ignorant! I seem to be: sometimes I think I do not know what I am good for! O love and mercy! O free grace! O infinite compassion! what shall I say! it is God; it is Jesus; it is the friend of sinners!

My dear love, labour, suffer, die and conquer! soldier of Christ, go on, and win the well-fought field. Keep your garments white and clean, fit for eternity. I pray God that this may be the lot of my dear correspondent, and your hearty friend, who inviolably loves you.

I. F. T.

LETTER XLVIII.

My dear Friend, Jan. 12th, 1761.

THOUGH we are abſent in body, yet I truſt we are preſent in ſpirit; and may the Lord Jeſus give us more abundantly that mark of our being his little children, viz. our love one to another. God is love. When we are like our divine maſter, we ſhall be eminently loving alſo. Love indeed alone, I ſee, can conquer this rebellious heart. O that I could truly ſay, "I yield, I yield at laſt, o'erwhelmed by love, and fall, and own thee conqueror!" you bid me write freely; I will endeavour ſo to do. Indeed when I am writing it ſeems always, as if I was talking to my own heart, and reſtraint is intirely baniſhed; but when I am in company with God's dear children, I find myſelf greatly unable to open my mouth, and ſo oftimes I refuſe,

"His righteouſneſs to impart,
"By hiding it within my heart."

I find there is no other way of going on unto perfection than by laying aſide every weight, and eſpecially the ſin which moſt eaſily beſets us, and ſteadily looking unto Jeſus. He who is the captain of my ſalvation, does go before me, and would, (I know quickly deſtroy all his, and my foes, if I did but follow him fully: but, alas! how often does Satan either divert, or drive me from Jeſus. The croud of my enemies are mightier than I, my courage fails, and I loſe ſight of my great high prieſt: Yet I have good reaſon to ſay, there is

mercy in Christ for every returning sinner. Though my heart is prone to wander from, and to leave the God I love, yet no sooner do I return towards him, than I find my Lord willing to receive me. I have been this last week past, much beset with wandering imaginations, and this, and the other was represented unto my mind: When I was faithful, and resolutely turned from the representations, the temptations wrought together for my good; but if any wise I gave way unto them they brought hurt and condemnation to my poor soul. I find it very hard to give up my whole heart to God, and it seems to me that if God was to command me to give it to any creature in the universe, it would not be half so hard as to give it to him, who is altogether worthy of it, yea and altogether lovely. What a proof is this of the depravity of our nature, and total apostacy from our original rectitude, that we should be so prone to forsake him who is the fountain of light, life, and love, and hew out unto ourselves broken cisterns which can hold no water! In JESUS there is a fountain of living waters, ever full and ever flowing; there we may drink, and yet no fear of its being exhausted. O! the riches of Jesus's love! may I, and you be wholly taken up therewith.

I find at times, that my eye is evil, because GOD is good. O! how deeply am I fallen from all that is good. Lord give me to feel it yet more abundantly, that I may cry more earnestly to thee who art the giver of every good, and perfect gift; then wilt thou assuredly supply my wants. Thy promises are made unto those who believe, and pray; O that thou wouldst fear them all to my poor soul.

I design to set apart some part of the Saturday, every week, for close examination of myself, that by

by the light of GOD's ſpirit I may diſcover what faults I have been guilty of, or what progreſs I have made in grace the proceeding week.

Though we may never meet more on earth, yet ſhall we, (I truſt) join in ſinging the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb, which ſhall never have an end, but employ a whole eternity. O bleſſed expectation of living for ever to praiſe Immanuel's dying love! Pray remember me at the throne of grace, reprove freely whatever you ſee, or fear amiſs in me: probe the wound to the bottom; that any evil which lies concealed may be brought to light, that ſo I may come to the good Phyſician to be healed. O may you ſink deeper, and deeper into GOD, till you be wholly loſt in his fullneſs.

"Till he more of heaven beſtow,
"And let the veſſel break
"Let your ranſom'd ſpirit go,
"To graſp the GOD you ſeek."

So prays your affectionate Siſter,
and humble Servant.

Teuſday

P. S. Mr. P——was this morning ſtruck with a palſey, which prevented our friend meeting with us: M. M. ſupplied the place: GOD gave me to ſee myſelf very proud, and fooliſh; and that inſtead of falling at the feet of all, I wanted them to be at mine. O the precioufneſs of that blood which can blot out ſins of ſo deep a dye! But I want to be made inwardly clean: nothing I find but a new heart will do. I can truly ſay I loath myſelf, but this does not bring humility into my heart; nothing but JESU's love can do that. Pray much for me, and the good LORD grant I may be earneſt for myſelf. Adieu.

LETTER XLIX.

My dear Friend, Jan. 20th, 1761.

I Heartily thank you for writing so soon: I trust to follow your advice. Sure my compassionate JESUS will not suffer me to stop short of the mark, for the prize of our high calling, but his powerful arm will support, and help me, I trust to go toward perfection. I feel more and more I can do nothing, and that all my strength consists in hanging on JESUS. I feel often my own will as a mountain which seems to stand between my soul and GOD; but I know, if my spiritual Zerubbabel shall appear, it shall, before him, become a plain. I find power to carry my diseased soul to JESUS, for him to heal it, and I believe he will perfect his streng h in my weakness: I feel such a testimony of the faithfulness of God, that I cannot help believing he will seal all his promises to my soul. I see the word of GOD so firm and steadfast, that it seems indeed I have sure ground to build upon. How can I have surer, since JESUS has sworn to destroy, and drive out all my foes before his face?

"My captain leads me forth
"To conquest and a crown."

I find I come far short of being what I ought to be; and yet indeed I stand astonished at GOD's mercy to one who is so prone to leave him as I am! Whensoever I return unto him, I find him willing to receive me; when I fall at the feet of his mercy, I find free boundless compassion for ever roll in his adorable breast. He is the friend of sinners,

ners, and bleſſed be his dear name, he is my friend.

I had a very great bleſſing on Saturday at Brother G——s. In the morning while at prayers, I felt ſuch a witneſs that I ſhould ſtand on Sion's Hill, and behold the fair beauty of the Lamb that died for all, as made me amazed! O what a bleſſing is it, that there is an eternity, wherein to enjoy GOD, and aſcribe praiſes unto him! Lord tune, and prepare my heart now on earth, that I may be more fit to join the bleſſed quires above. Take away every jarring ſtring, then ſhall all be harmony and love.

I have juſt now joined a few moments in prayer with my ſiſter, and both our ſouls were greatly refreſhed: Our Jeſus was with us indeed, and his power reſted on our hearts. She ſeems to be rather better, though ſtill in pain and feveriſh.

M—— has great confidence that God will give her a new and ſanctified heart: ſhe found on Saturday, while at prayer with Mrs. *** a ſurpriſing change in her whole ſoul, attended with an uncommon degree of happineſs; and on Sunday at public worſhip, theſe words were ſpoken to her heart with great power, *my will ſhall be thy will, and thy will ſhall be my will.* Afterwards ſhe found power to give herſelf wholly unto her Maker, to be diſpoſed of as he pleaſed: all her idols were taken away from her, and all thoſe things which entangled her ſoul, are beneath her feet: ſhe is brought into a ſubmiſſive patient waiting for all the bleſſings her Saviour has to beſtow upon her. Bleſſed ſtate! amazing goodneſs! and all theſe bleſſings flow from the croſs of Chriſt: 'tis his dear, and precious blood which purchaſes all things for us.

On Sunday Mr. *** preached from Gal. vi. 14, 15, 16. From which he took occasion to shew us, that by what CHRIST did upon the cross, he not only paid our debt, and made satisfaction for our sins; but also procured that power, which when communicated unto us, from him, enables us to bear all the calamities, crosses, pains, and sufferings incident unto us in this vale of tears; and to crucify and destroy every lust, motion, and sinful desire of the flesh. He also observed that all our temporal enjoyments were purchased thereby, which observation has since greatly endeared to me the necessaries and conveniences of life which I enjoy. This I think is the purchase of my Saviour's BLOOD, the blood of him who is GOD, the blood of him who is the object of my love. O that I might feel this precious blood, which has procured my food, and raiment, and every other blessing of life, always sprinkled upon my heart. I find much want of simplicity of spirit, for tho' I can rejoice with those who do rejoice, yet I cannot, (as I desire) mourn with those who mourn. I feel pity, and love to them, yet I have not that deep sense of their sufferings, which I apprehend I ought to have. O that this self love was turned into the love of God, then would it flow more freely to my fellow creatures. O that I might cease from all self seeking, and seek only to know Jesus Christ, and him crucified. May he bind my spirit to his cross, and subdue my will, and make it subject to his own and unite my soul unto himself. I bless God, I see his hand more abundantly in all things, and therefore in some measure can in all things resign myself unto him. I know by that little, little taste I have had, what a rest there must be, when there is a constant freedom from inordinate care, evil

desire,

desire, and every other sin: when all is solid joy, firm peace, and stedfast rejoicing in hope of that day when faith shall be swallowed up of sight, and death in immortality. Glory be to God that you, my happy sister, enjoy this perfect liberty; but do you go on also toward your full consummation of bliss! there is still much behind! reach forth unto the whole mind which is in Christ; till you have grown up into him your living head in all things.

I give God thanks, that he does make the barren wilderness, a garden of Eden unto you. Behold the holy Jesus! see he holds out for you the crown of righteousness, which e'er long your Lord will give you the full possession of! O that we may both meet in those realms of bliss! this is the unfeigned prayer of

Your affectionate Sister, in Christ.

LETTER L.

My Dear Sister,

I RETURN you hearty thanks for yours: and it is matter of praise that our dear Jesus made you useful unto any one soul, and that his gospel is likely to take place in that barren town.

I bless the Lord for carrying on his work in my soul. On Thursday the fifth instant, the Lord did manifest himself unto me in such a manner as I never experienced before: it appeared to me as if I had been taken up into heaven, and the spirit peculiarly opened the scriptures unto me. My heart was abundantly filled with peace, and love and praise. These words were powerfully impreſt upon my mind; "I will water thee every moment,

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and keep thee night and day." And indeed from that time my soul has been as a watered garden: the Lord has broke down the wall of partition which stood between my soul and him; all that day I could truly say there was nothing stood between God and my believing heart, for I saw the LORD, as it had been face to face. Ever since I find that the LORD has subdued all things in me, unto himself O that he may destroy all that is, or ever would be capable of offending him, and I trust he will. I find CHRIST exceeding precious to my soul. In every action I can say, I do this unto the LORD: evil has not any power to hurt me, it would, but grace is superior, and JESUS is love.

I find much happiness at this time, and a willingness, that GOD should bless every soul before me, if it seemeth good in his sight. Not that I can be in the least contented without any of the blessings he hath to give: all my cry is, let the LORD be glorified, and my JESUS exalted, and I ask no more. In a low degree I can say, thy will be done. And I do steadfastly believe it will not be long before he will bring my soul into the perfect liberty of his children. Bear me on your heart, up to my dear Redeemer's throne. GOD has answered every prayer, but that for purity of heart, and he will surely answer that, LORD I do believe, help my unbelief.

Glory be to GOD only, for it is he who hath trod the wine-press alone, it is the LORD of hosts, the great JEHOVAH, the Almighty GOD, the Prince of Peace, that alone can do this thing. LORD thy arm alone can bring salvation! O let the angel of the covenant descend, and roll away the stone of unbelief, and let me behold a rising GOD in my heart; that when the sin of Israel, and

of Judah is fought for, it may not be found. LORD say amen to my hearty prayer. Help me SAVIOUR, speak the word, and perfect me in love.

My dear friend, go forward, I bless GOD for what you are, and what you do. Love JESUS yet more abundantly, for *he is altogether lovely*. See he offers you a whole eternity of love. He has made you *a royal diadem, a crown of glory in his hand*. He has numbered you among the happy few, who have washed and made their garments white in the blood of the lamb, and who shall walk with him in white, being worthy. You have thus far overcome, hold on a little longer, and you will sit down with our dear REDEEMER on his exalted, and blissful throne! the LORD give you all the mind which is in himself, *and purify you, even as he is pure*.

I am your inviolable Friend,
and humble Servant.

LETTER LI.

My dear Friend, Feb. 20th, 1761.

ON Tuesday last we had a happy meeting, the power of the LORD was most amazingly present: he did indeed sit on my soul, *as a refiner's fire, and was unto me as fullers soap*. I was assured he was destroying the man of sin.

On Wednesday I wept tears of love and joy, most of the day: and in the evening I seemed stript of all self sufficiency, and self-will; and felt such propensity in my soul to cling to CHRIST, that I could compare myself unto nothing, more fitly, than a drowning man, who catches at every twig in his reach.

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On Thurſday morning as a few of us were at prayer, I felt my ſoul emptied of whatever defiled and burdened it, and a change paſſed upon all its powers, then I rejoiced greatly in the LORD, but I could not ſay I had a clean heart. Yet I believe I ſhall never more feel thoſe evil tempers in my ſoul, which in times paſt have had a being in it. Since then at times it has ſeemed to me, as if I had been ſurrounded with the powers of darkneſs, yet though, in this ſenſe, in floods of temptation, I find power to truſt God, and caſt myſelf upon him. I have had at ſome times more happineſs and meltings of heart from infuſions of love, than I have had theſe few days; but I think theſe have been abated by the pain, I felt from the ſurrounding temptations I juſt mentioned. I have ſurely taſted of my Lord's cup. It ſeems, as if my Saviour has given me an eſtate, but has not yet put me in full poſſeſſion of it. I cannot think my ſoul has yet entered into the fulleſt reſt which *remains for the children of God* on earth. I cannot *yet rejoice ever more, pray without ceaſing and in every thing give thanks.* Yet I do ſay, *thy will*, O Lord, *be done.* I caſt my ſoul on Jeſus, and though I have ſometimes queſtioned myſelf, whether I was not angry, or proud, yet upon the moſt ſolemn approaches unto the throne of grace, and the moſt unfeigned deſires offered up to God, to ſhew me how it was, I cannot find, that in theſe inſtances he doth condemn me, though the devil doth.

Saturday Evening.

Glory! Glory! Glory! be to my God, I can now ſay the Lord has eſtabliſhed my ſoul in his grace and favour more abundantly than ever! While I was converſing with one of my friends upon the deep things of God, and excellent privileges of the goſpel, I was ſtrengthened to believe

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the great and precious promiſes, and felt the virtue of them, or had them accompliſhed in my ſoul.

In our little meeting one aſked me if God had fulfilled, that bleſſed promiſe unto me, EZEK. xxxvi. 26. *A new heart will I give you.* I durſt not, could not ſay but he had. While we were at prayer I was ſtill farther convinced of the truth thereof. I could appeal unto my dear Redeemer: *Thou haſt cleanſed my heart!* That bleſſed promiſe was powerfully and ſweetly applied to my joyous ſoul. *Ye are clean through the word which I have ſpoken unto you.* And ever ſince I have been enabled to rejoice greatly. O bleſſed Jeſus, he is a precious Saviour! *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name, who redeemeth thy life from deſtruction, and crowneth thee with loving kindneſſes, and tender mercies: who forgiveth all thine iniquities and healeth all thy diſeaſes.* The good Lord is alſo greatly pouring his ſpirit upon many of your friends and mine. They are on the full ſtretch to eternal life. O what glorious goſpel days do we live in! May our lives be ſpent in praiſe and obedience, may our latter end be full of peace and triumph, and our eternity bliſsful. So prays

Your affectionate, but unworthy Siſter in Chriſt.

LETTER LII.

My dear Friend, Feb. 28th, 1761.

I Have nothing to tell you, but more and more of the goodneſs of God! amazed I ſtand! O wondrous love! my ſoul lies humbled in the duſt! I can truly ſay I think myſelf the meaneſt of all;

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but Jesus has, (in me) destroyed the works of the devil, and brought in everlasting righteousness, and the effects thereof are quietness, and assurance for ever.

At our meeting to day the mighty power of God overwhelmed us! Sister K. sunk down in her chair and then fell to the ground, crying, "Lord this day seal me thine abode for ever! Destroy my enemies for they are thine also. O come Lord Jesus! surely thou wilt come, and wilt not tarry. We then kneeled down to prayer; she continued still to call on God with all her might for some time, till the Lord heard and answered. She then said "praise God for me, he hath sealed me "to the day of redemption! The Saviour has "made me, *all glorious within, my name is writ-* "*ten in the Lamb's book of life, and his name* "*is written on my forehead! I am the bride, the* "*Lamb's wife!* O my Christ! Lord! I the vilest of "all, but thou hast blotted out all my sins! O "thy great power! I never did any thing but sin "against thee till now, but I shall do thy will, I "shall now glorify thee in all things! Lord! save "all my friends, ! Lord save all the world!

My soul was truly affected with this, and sunk down into deep humility before God. I said, Lord, how hast thou raised up unto thyself, children even of these stones! O that I should be a witness of thy love! indeed my soul stands amazed! four in one house, who know Jesus, and the full power of his resurrection! O that we may adorn the gospel in all things, and be fully like our master, in meekness, and lowliness of heart. I see at a distance, there is such a height and depth in his love, unto which I have not attained, that it makes me long to improve in every circumstance, and thirst for more of that mind which is

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in Chriſt: even for perfect holineſs as much as ever I did for freedom from evil tempers.

I frequently feel a painful ſympathy with thoſe ſouls which are awakened, but not joined unto Chriſt by one ſpirit. And ſuch a love to all the members of his myſtical body, that I think I could willingly lay down my life for their ſakes to bring one of them to the knowledge of Jeſus. My ſoul is perfectly reſigned unto the will of God, though I feel the ſtrongeſt deſire to depart, and to be with him, whom my ſoul loveth. I ſee by faith a crown of glory held forth unto me, and the Lord bid me fight for it, and aſſures me of a conqueſt over all that ſhall oppoſe me. I am like a new born babe hanging every moment on him in whom my great ſtrength lieth. Satan is continually tempting me, but I ſee clearly when he approacheth to bring the temptation, the door of my heart is ſhut, and the enemy cannot enter in. I alſo diſcover, as the ſoul grows in grace, it gets farther out of the enemy's reach. My foot is ſet on ſatan's neck, and ſalvation is appointed for walls and bulwarks. O that I may ever ſtand on an high hill, and have (as you expreſs it) my enemies, as crawling inſects at the bottom thereof. I deſire to follow your advice and learn of all who are taught of God, and are ſimple of heart. When any doubt ariſes in my mind, whether ſuch a thought or word, or action, was ſinful; for a ſpeedy, and ſure ſolution of this, I turn from all things, unto God, and deſire him to ſhine upon my underſtanding, and conſcience, and convince me truly of what quality my actions are, and what ſpirit I am of; and he has always graciouſly anſwered to the great ſatisfaction of my ſoul.

On Saturday at morning preaching, I was telling the Lord that there was nothing but what I

would willingly give up for him; I had a ſtrong impreſſion that ſo it was, for, the ſpirit ſuggeſted, "thou haſt given me all, for thou haſt given me "thy whole heart." It was alſo applied to my mind in the morning, *ariſe, ſhine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee.* Lord! what am I! I am nothing; but thou art all in all.

I am very glad, that God gives you to drink into his loving ſpirit, and that you riſe higher, and higher into his life and likeneſs. O my dear, he has abundantly more to beſtow! let us join in bleſſing and praiſing our dear Jeſus, and meet at ſome hour in the day, at the throne of grace. Glory be to God, we ſhall meet, e'er long at his right hand, and ſee his lovely face, without a dimming vail; we ſhall join that enraptured number, *which came out of great tribulations, and waſhed and made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.* We ſhall caſt our crowns before his feet, and aſcribe, ſalvation, glory, honour, and praiſe to God, and the Lamb for ever! Precious Saviour! O how rich, that grace which is ſo freely beſtowed; how amazing that love, which induced him to leave the boſom of his father, and empty himſelf of his glory, yea, and ſuffer death, even the death of the croſs, that we, vile creatures, might be brought into the favour, and reſtored unto the image of God! O that we may both love him more abundantly, until we riſe to all the glorious height of humble love. And what will be the end? O rapturous proſpect! *corruption, will put on incorruption, and this mortal, will put on immortality*, and prayer ſhall be ſwallowed up of praiſe! then will all be unfading, never ending bliſs: ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee, and trials, and temptations be no more! the dear Lord Jeſus be

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near to your heart, and make you faithful and fruitful; holy, and happy; then will your ſtate be ſuch as is wiſhed, by

Your ever loving, but unworthy Siſter.

LETTER LIII.

My very dear Brother, March 10, 1761.

I Hope we are both agreed with Chriſt, according to the articles of peace propounded to us in a preached goſpel. We have made him our foundation, and city of refuge; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the excellency and riches of his free grace, wherein he hath abounded unto us, and all who believe on his bleſſed name.

Now what prudential means ſhall we uſe in order to grow in this divine knowledge? as you are better ſkilled in this happy art, and further advanced in grace, and chriſtian holineſs, I think you ſhould point out thoſe means by which you attained the pearl of perfect love; and by grace I will follow your directions. But as you aſked the queſtion, I will venture to give you my opinion.

Firſt, I deſire to hear, read, mark, learn, and with a good ſpiritual apoſtle inwardly digeſt, God's moſt holy word, and make it a ſtanding rule in all reſpects, of my faith and practice.

Secondly, I deſire to pray, with all prayer, private and public, mental and vocal, at all times, and in every place, and in every ſtate, and circumſtance of life: and alſo make my Maker's law the ſubject of my meditations in the night ſeaſon upon my bed.

Thirdly, I desire to fast, or use abstinence, as my bodily health and constitution will admit.

Fourthly, I desire to communicate at all proper seasons, but earnestly long for sanctified altars, holy ministers, and living communicants: Lord how long?

Fifthly, I desire to do good unto all men, friends and enemies, according to my little ability as the word of truth directs; and lay out my strength in his service at home and abroad, in the way and manner he shall point out, according to his unerring providence.

Sixthly, I desire to hew Agag in pieces; to put away every Dalilah, and to sacrifice every Isaac: If required, to pluck out every right eye, to cut off every right hand, to spare none, though ever so near and dear unto the old man: and I hope all this without partiality. In a word, I desire to put on the whole divine panoply, whereby I shall overcome all the infernal powers of hell and death: and after I have done all this, I desire to look over, and through all shadows, unto the eternal Saviour, who died on mount Calvary, with all the faith he has given me, till I *be rooted, and grounded in love, and able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; that I may be filled with all the fullness of God.* What can a worm do more to gain the prize? If my friend will take notice of any means I have omitted, or shew me better than I have mentioned, I will comply with his directions. I want to save my soul, and that God's own way. I have already seen his wonders in the land of Egypt, in the red sea, and in the barren wilderness; and shall I not see his glory in

in the land of promise! I cannot fear! his mercy endureth for ever!

I remain your affectionate Friend,
but very unworthy Brother.

LETTER LIV.

My dear Friend, Feb. 28th, 1761.

MAY grace, mercy and peace, be multiplied unto you from God, and our Lord Jesus Christ; who is the fountain and foundation of all our blessings. Oh! how highly favoured are we! God's image stamped on dust! when lost, redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, and now supported by his glorious love! O that we may never live beneath our privileges!

"Raise our groveling spirits up,
"To our calling's glorious hope."

My soul lieth in the dust before him, in whose sight angels veil their faces. I prove that the Lord delights in those who are of an humble spirit. I sink into nothing in my own esteem, more and more, as I draw nearer to God, and become more like him. My dear friend help me by your prayers. I sincerely thank you, and God my Saviour, for the use you have already been of to me: my God shall reward you seven fold for all your kindness to me.

Oh! that death may be written in large characters on every creature, yea on all created good in this world, that we may even now anticipate the happiness of the next, and partake of the bliss of those who

who are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night.

I have found a daily cross since I came unto this place, from a quarter I least expected it, but it has been a greater blessing to me, than I can conceive the want of it could have been: so that I have had true rest, and more of the loving powerful presence of God, than for some time before. O let us praise the Lord with every breath!

I doubt not but my dear friend has had much communion with Jesus, since we parted. Is he not fairer than all the children of men? Yes: *he is altogether lovely!*

My desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may sink deeper into him, and still be less in your own esteem: and be filled with the truest tenderness and long-suffering to all the children of God, yea all the children of men. Our meeting again, I hope will be to our advantage; till then may the God of peace be with you.

I am your affectionate, &c.

LETTER LV.

My dear Friend, May 2, 1760.

I Heartily thank you for your profitable letter, it has been of singular use, and great comfort to my soul. I see the more I have of the presence of God, and the more I desire to have: the more I see of his goodness, and less I think of my own, which humbles me to the dust before him, while I am lost in wonder, filled with love, and tears of joy. If business calls me in the midst of this sweet and blessed communion with my dear Saviour, which is often

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the caſe, I leave you to judge how diſagreeable company is at ſuch a time, yet even then I feel my will entirely reſigned to that which is my duty; I caſt all my care on him, who careth for me, and I find him all-ſufficient, a preſent help in time of need.

I have not always the ſame degree of joy, for at ſometimes I feel all my ſoul carried unto, and centered in God, that I am wrapt up in his embrace; but at other times I hang a dependant creature upon him, and ſay in myſelf, it is a thouſand times more than I deſerve, that I can now call God my father and my love.

When news came that you was dead, I thought what can I want for him which he now hath not, or for myſelf, but that I may be like him. I could not indeed think it a crime to drop an indebted tear for one God had made ſo uſeful to my ſoul.

But bleſſed be God you are ſpared a little longer: and aſk the unworthieſt of human creatures: "tell me, when ſaw you him whom my ſoul loveth." He is preſent with me, my dear friend, whom your ſoul loveth. I ſhould think myſelf the moſt miſerable wretch living, even in the midſt of the greateſt confluence of worldly bleſſings, if he was abſent for one hour.

"O! 'tis hell from thee to part,
Preſs me cloſer to thy heart!"

And I thank the God of my life and ſalvation, I can anſwer to your other enquiry with ſatisfaction, "Do you grow in grace?" I believe I do. But O Lord, give me, give me to grow more abundantly like unto thy bleſſed ſelf.

Pray for me, and if I may not ſee you, write to me as often and as plain as you can. God bleſs you, farewell.

I am, &c.

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LETTER LVI.

My dear Brother, Feb. 9, 1760.

WHOM, for Christ's sake, I love, and esteem, wishing grace, mercy and peace, may attend you all your days. I have often thought of you since I had the happiness to see you; and I hope you have not forgot poor me, who am less than the least of all saints. You knew when I was with you, my weakness, and the many trials I laboured under. 'Tis true, I have changed my place, but I have not changed my company. I still carry my wicked heart about with me, which I find to be deceitful above expression, and desperately wicked beyond comparison: the devil, and it, are causing me continual trouble: I groan, being burdened. Oh! that Jesus would soon end this war within. Never did chased hart pant more eagerly for the cooling stream, than my weary soul for the perfect liberty of the children of God. Hope deferred, makes the heart sick. Oh! what a happy moment would that be, when I should be able to say, I live no longer, but Christ liveth in me, the sole monarch of my pure, and simple heart! as for all other things, I do indeed count them but dung and dross, so I may win Christ, and the prize of perfect holiness. I have too much sought water in broken cisterns, I now desire to go to the fountain. I count money, and honours, and pleasures poor, little, empty, insignificant things: a dram of grace is worth a thousand worlds. Oh! give me grace, I ask no more.

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I hope my friend is going on towards perfection, forgetting the things behind, and the things present, which would alienate his mind from God, and stop the intercourse between the lovely Jesus, and his soul.

I was exceeding glad to hear the comfortable account you gave Mr.***, of the success of the gospel in that part of the vineyard where you are labouring. The good Lord increase it more and more.

I am entered into another man's labours in this place, he hath prepared the way before me. The Redeemer is carrying on a glorious work in this city: you would be pleased to see what a large congregation we have; on Sunday evenings it is computed there are four thousand hearers, and the society encreases weekly, and I hope these are but the beginnings of good days.

I beg you would pray for us, that in all things we may approve ourselves the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. I kindly thank you for the last advice you gave me, when you left me in London, and I thank God he hath preserved me from falling into the temptation. I hope you will not fail to pray for me in particular; I am sure I do love and pray for you, who am

Your affectionate Brother, &c.

LETTER LVII.

My dear Friend, May 3, 1760.

THE questions you desire me to resolve, are undoubtedly respecting one of the most important affairs

affairs of human life; and therefore deſerves a ſolid conſideration, and an ingenuous anſwer.

1ſt. "Is it lawful for a believer to marry with an unbeliever?

2d. "Is it expedient for a believer to marry with one of a different opinion in religion, and who worſhips God in a different place and mode though a child of God."

With regard to the firſt: let it be carefully obſerved that nothing can be lawful which God has directly or indirectly forbidden: now I cannot conceive but he hath forbidden this: be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, therefore it is unlawful. The firſt propoſition will be granted. If it is ſaid with reſpect to the ſecond, that the apoſtle only forbids chriſtians to marry with heathens, and his words affect not the preſent caſe. It may be anſwered they do affect the preſent caſe notwithſtanding: for there can be no real, and ſpecific difference between an unconverted perſon, though baptized in the name of Chriſt; and an heathen The difference can only be in the name, and external things, which change not their nature and diſpoſition, nor their real character with God, who judgeth not according to appearance, but according to the heart. Is an heathen an enemy to God by wicked works? So is an unconverted chriſtian. Is an heathen an idolater? So is an unbelieving chriſtian. He is either covetous, or a lover of pleaſure, both which are idolatry. The heathen, and the merely nominal chriſtian, act both from the ſame principles, and with the ſame intentions. Whereas there is a real and ſpecific difference between a child of God, and a child of ſatan; the former is a partaker of the divine nature, 2 Peter i. 4 Has the Holy Ghoſt abiding within him.

him. John xiv. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 12. And Rom. viii 16. His body is a temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and God dwelleth and walketh in him. 2 Cor. vi. 16. But an unconverted perſon with all the refinements of birth, education, and the form of godlineſs, is at enmity with God, being only born after the fleſh, for the carnal mind is enmity againſt God. Rom. viii. 7. The devil worketh and reigneth in his heart. Luke 11. 24. Yea himſelf lyeth in the ſame, without God in the world. Eph. ii. 12. Now nothing can be more certain than that all are unlawfully married, whom God does not join together: and can we think that God will join a partaker of his nature, unto one poſſeſſed of the devil, or that Chriſt will unite one of the members of his myſtical body, unto a limb of ſatan? Can any thing be more unlikely, or more contrary to the nature and wiſdom of God.

Beſides let us conſider the evils which have followed ſuch unequal marriages, both in the antient and modern times, and we may eaſily read the unlawfulneſs of them in the puniſhments entailed upon them. In the old world: the ſons of God: i. e. the poſterity of righteous Seth; ſaw the daughters of men; i. e. the deſcendants of wicked Cain, that they were fair, not that they were pious, and they took themſelves wives which they choſe, not which God choſe for them: and what was the conſequence? By and by, we read of an univerſal defection from God, and godlineſs. Gen. vi. 5. *Then God ſaw the wickedneſs of man was great in the earth, and all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart were only evil*, and that continually. And what was the end and iſſue of all? An univerſal corruption, brought on an epidemical deſolation: God determines to de-

ſtroy thoſe who would not mortify the luſts of the fleſh, but joined themſelves with the daughters of Belial. *Therefore the Lord ſaid I will deſtroy from the earth the men which I have created.*

Though Sampſon's wife, who was a daughter of the uncircumciſed, pleaſed him hugely for a time, yet his affections were ſoon alienated from her, and what was the end thereof I need not inform you. Judges xix. Moſes himſelf, ſcarcely eſcaped being ſlain of the Lord; for hearkening unto his Zipporah, and deferring the ordinance of circumciſion. Exod. iv. 24. And you find Solomon, of a wiſe king, become an apiſh dotard, and of a pious worſhiper, becomes a groſs idolator; and all by means of ſtrange wives. 1 Kings, xi. 4, 5.

When the old ſerpent is in the heart of a wife who lyeth in your boſom, he has a fair opportunity of winding himſelf into yours alſo. Faithful Abraham had ſuch a ſenſe of this matter, that he could not die, and go to paradiſe contentedly, until he made his ſteward take an oath in the name of the God of the whole earth, that he would not take a wife for his ſon Iſaac, of the Canaanites where he dwelt, but from among his own kindred. Gen. xxiv. 3, 4.

How very few inſtances have we among ourſelves in the preſent day, of the believing huſband or wife, converting the contrary party; but how many melancholy examples have we, of the unbelieving huſband or wife, reconverting the other party to the world and the devil? and no wonder, that the ſerpent, and Eve twiſted together, ſhould be a cord ſtrong enough, to draw any of Adam's poſterity to eat of the forbidden fruit, as it did their father: neither is it to be wondered at, that God ſhould withold his bleſſings from matches of Satan's making.

I therefore

I therefore conclude upon the whole, that it is far from being lawful for a believer to marry with an unbeliever; and therefore to be avoided by all who would escape the displeasure of God, and would have his blessing upon them in that sacred state.

The other question shall be considered, but not having leisure at present, I must exercise your patience till the next post.

I remain your affectionate Brother, &c.

LETTER LVIII.

My dear Friend, May 6, 1760.

I Suppose by this time you have had the opportunity of perusing my last; but I am at an uncertainty what your sentiments are concerning it, yet nevertheless according to my promise I will give you my thoughts on your second enquiry.

"Is it expedient for a believer to marry with "one of another opinion? &c"

I think my dear friend, not in any wise: 'tis granted it is lawful, but it will be found to be highly inexpedient in these particulars.

1st. The greatest part of that spiritual strength and comfort, which should, and may be given and received between a christian man and his wife, will be lost, and a foundation laid for perpetual jarrs and disputes.

Although there may be difference of opinion in a nation without breach of charity, yet there scarcely can be difference of opinion between man and wife, without alienation of affection. And the more sincere either, or both parties are,

the more earneſt they will be to have their own ſentiments regarded. Though the work of God is for the ſubſtance of it, the ſame in the minds of all men, yet it is not eaſy to ſay, what a difference, different opinions may make in many circumſtances of it. They who are brought unto God by one ſyſtem of doctrine, have a vein of enjoyments, a turn of experience, and a method of ſpeaking peculiar to themſelves; which does not ſo exactly agree with any other. And what an inconceivable loſs muſt it be, if but ſome part of that help, which they might give to each other, is wanting. Nothing elſe can poſſibly make up their loſs. If they are loving, good natured, and generous people, they may poſſibly live together without outrageous quarrels; yet alas, this is but a little matter toward that good they ſhould do to one another, in the great affair of their ſalvation!

If you was to form an idea of the happieſt couple in the world, you would conceive them to be of one heart, and of one way in all things, if poſſible, but eſpecially in the matter of religion. A want of this, would give a notion of their want of happineſs in each other, and you could not avoid thinking, but as far as they were wanting in agreement in their opinion, they would be wanting in their felicity.

2d. Another thing which makes it inexpedient is an hindrance in their private devotion. Mutual prayer is moſt prevalent. *If two*, (ſays our Saviour) *of you, ſhall agree on earth, as touching any thing they ſhall aſk, it ſhall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven.* Matt. xviii. 19. But how much of the energy, and profit of prayer will be loſt, when perhaps they think it right only to pray with a book, and the other judges it quite

preferable

preferable to pray as the ſpirit ſhall aſſiſt, and give him utterance. How uncomfortable is this diſagreement: how many ſweet and excellent bleſſings are loſt, for want of mutual prayer. It is a ſorry condition for a woman, in a married ſtate, to receive little, or no benefit from her huſband's prayers in private: would not every woman which makes religion her buſineſs and happineſs think it the greateſt loſs ſhe could ſuſtain? and the diſadvantage would be equally great on the man's part.

3d. Again; the ſame inconveniences would alſo occur in family as in ſecret prayer. There would be continual hinderances to the performance of that duty, without which every family muſt live miſerably, and expoſed to the diſpleaſure of God. *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, and upon the families, which call not upon thy name.*

4th. Let it alſo be obſerved, how uncomfortable and unſeemingly it would be in public worſhip, for thoſe whom God hath made one fleſh, and who live as ſuch on the week day, to part on the Sunday: and as ſoon, it may be, as they go out at their own door, to their public devotion, turn their backs and go different ways, as though they were utter ſtrangers to each other. Who could bear the thoughts of this? if they love not one another they are moſt wretchedly miſerable; if they do, it renders this ſeparation more difficult ſtill. But,

5th. What muſt become of the education of the children? this hereby, will be rendered almoſt impracticable. If they are both of them conſcientious in their profeſſion, they will be loth that their children ſhould not be educated in the ſame way which they judge to be the beſt in the world, and in which they place, and find their ſupreme happineſs. How hard will it be for a tender mother to ſee her children, brought up, before her eyes, in

a way she disapproves? and will it not be equally hard for the loving and obedient wife, to thwart her husband's counsels to his children, and caution them against that, unto which he warmly advises them? and yet one of these she must do. She has but this alternative either to disoblige her husband, or offend her conscience. It will be equally difficult to the husband to see his children trained up in the way he would not have them to go; and yet he will find it difficult to grieve a loving and tender wife. So that between the two, the children will remain uneducated, or taught in their tender age, to halt between two opinions, and in their advanced years have no religion at all. These things are of great weight with me, and I believe will be with every one who thinks of them. They will I hope ever deter me from taking so indirect and dangerous a step. And I pray God they may have the same weight with my dear friend. I heartily commend you to the providence and direction of Almighty God.

While I remain your affectionate Brother, &c.

LETTER LIX.

My dear Friend, June 14, 1760.

I Received your very agreeable letter; it was Benjamin's mess indeed, and so full it was running over when it came to hand; yet I believe there was not any lost.

The last, and the former favours of which you speak, and for which you so heartily thank God, and me, are, in my esteem few and insignificant, the reason of this is, I look at them in love, which

which never thinks it does enough, and you look at them in gratitude, which never thinks it makes sufficient returns : both are bleſſed diſpoſitions.

That, my dear friend, is the happieſt way of deceiving others which you mention ; to be better in reality, than in appearance.

I never fear you being habitually unkind, or ungrateful, if it is at all ſo, it will be only when you are more ſo to yourſelf, by groundleſs reflection, than to any others.

You deſire me to help you all I can. The love I have for your ſoul, together with my own intereſt in doing good, are motives ſufficient to induce me thereunto, without my dear friends ſolicitations. Next to my own growth in grace, and perſonally giving glory to God, nothing is more deſired by me. Nor would any thing, beſides the enjoyment of God, give me greater happineſs, than to be capable of doing it.

" You think the being grieved, when thoſe you love, behave unkindly to you, argues a defect in your holineſs." If we would ſee this in a clear light, we muſt, 1ſt. Enquire into the nature of the unkindneſs, 2d. Into the nature, and degree of your grief, before we can ſay whether it argues a want in, or is a branch of holineſs.

If the unkindneſs of your friend, diſhonours God, brings a ſcandal upon religion, and guilt upon his own conſcience ; then you have the dear Redeemer for the pattern of your grief. *He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardneſs of ther hearts.* Mark 3. 5. But if it only effects your own private character, or intereſt, or eſpecially your humour and inclination ; to be grieved to a degree of unhappineſs, cannot but argue want of reſignation to the will of God. For ſuch an unkindneſs may be permitted

mitted by God Almighty for some good purpose, to you, and should not only be submitted unto, but thankfully chosen. 2d, If the nature, and degree of your grief is only such as arises from that sympathy you have with your friend, and which you would have had upon the consideration of so ungenerous an action done by him to any other, you could not be without this grief, but you must be without an hatred to sin, and affection to the sinner, which will not consist with holiness.

But if it greatly wounds your quiet, disturbs your peace and hinders your enjoyment of God; it argues too great an attachment unto, and, it may be, dependance upon your friend: which cannot be without the soul, less, or more being drawn from its fixedness, and full complacency in God; and inclining more unto other spirits than it should. In this case there is great need of mortification to the refined pleasure of particular friendships, and to know no man after the flesh, that the soul may more closely adhere to Christ Jesus, its true and proper centre.

Though you have been, without reason, kept from the benefit of assembling with your brethren in that particular way you mention, yet if you are hereafter permitted, I would not have you refuse to go. For 1st, it would have too great an appearance of captiousness, which you should be entirely free from: 2d, it would be in effect slighting an excellent means of improving in holiness: and 3d, it would look like resentment.

The best way of making the calumnies, and aspersions, falsly cast upon you, disregarded by others, and profitable to yourself, is to offer them up to God in a sacrifice of pure thankfulness, that you are accounted worthy to suffer any

thing

thing for his ſake: and by letting all your obſervers ſee, by the whole tenor of your converſation, that there muſt be a ſtrange force committed upon your pure mind, before you cou'd be guilty of the things aſcribed unto you. When this is the caſe, hard words will not break your head, but gladden your heart: and that dirt maliciouſly thrown at your character, will return upon thoſe who caſt it; while it will make your name more ſweet in the ears of all who know you better, and love you more juſtly; and will alſo brighten your crown in the realms of immortal glory.

You ſee how I have unawares forgot myſelf; and almoſt conſumed my paper, before I have ſaid one word about my own ſoul.

I have lately had a great deal of pain in my head, which has brought me very low in my ſpirits, and greatly diminiſhed my ſtock of ſtrength: But I do not urge this by way of complaint, nor yet as an apology for any defect in me. No: I thank the dear Jeſus for all the pain I have felt; I dare ſay, if I had wanted any part of it, it wou'd have been a loſs to me. I know aſſuredly that *all things work together for my good*; even by this token, I love God.

I believe I have grown in grace lately, but not in the ſame reſpects, I did ſome time ſince: not in joy and tranſports; but in humility, patience, and reſignation: theſe graces I have had occaſion, in a peculiar manner to exerciſe; which, tho' they do not ſo immediately uſher in the harveſt of joyous extaſies, yet they will, they already do return with ſome degree of joy, and bring their ſheaves of ſpiritual advantage with them.

This is my laſt, beſt, and moſt determinate reſolution, to die, through the grace of Chriſt ſtrengthening me, rather than intentionally grieve

his

his holy Spirit. My bed, and the furniture of my room, the ſtones in the wall, and the beams in the timber of my habitation; yea the inviſible ſpirits of every order, which attend m midnight hours and my noon day walks, are all witneſſes of of the reſolutions I have made, and repeated in their preſence:- and I do not only confirm them with the tears which now flow from my eyes, but I would, if it was expedient, ſign them with the blood which runs in my veins. My God knows I fear nothing, but offending him, nor deſire any thing but to be like unto, and with him.

My dear friend pray for me. I know no one like minded, who naturally cares for my ſoul. I thank God for the care you have expreſſed for it. It is not a hard taſk to return the favour. I do not fail to pray for you: who am

Your affectionate Brother and Friend, &c.

LETTER LX.

Bath, Oct. 30, 1765.

To thoſe who love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in or about M——, ——, ——, ——, *Peace be multiplied to you from God the Father, and from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, through the operation of the Holy Ghoſt, Amen.*

BY the help of divine providence, and the aſſiſtance of your prayers, I came ſafe hither laſt Saturday ſe'nnight. I was and am ſtill a good deal weighed down under the ſenſe of mine inſufficiency to preach the unſpeakable riches of Chriſt to poor dying ſouls. This place is the ſeat of ſatan's gaudy throne: the Lord hath nevertheleſs a few names

here,

here, that are not ashamed of him, and of whom he is not ashamed, both among the poor and among the rich. There are not many of the last, though blessed be God for any one! 'tis a great miracle if one camel passes through the eye of a needle; or, in other words, if one rich person enters into the kingdom of God. I thank God that none of you are rich in the things of this world, you are freed from a dreadful snare, even from Dives's portion in this world. May you know the happiness attending your state! it is a mercy to be drove to the throne of grace even by bodily want, and to live in dependance on divine mercy even for a morsel of bread.

I have been sowing the seed that the Lord hath given both in Bath and Bristol, and I hope your prayers have not been lost upon me as a minister; for though I have not been able to discharge my office as I would, the Lord hath in some measure stood by me, and over-ruled my foolishness and helplessness. I am much supported by the thought that you bear me upon your hearts, and that when you come to the throne of grace to beg a blessing for me in the name of Jesus, the Lord doth in no wise cast you out. With regard to the state of my soul, I find, blessed be God, that as my day is, so is my strength to travel on, without minding much either good or bad report.

My absence from you answers two good ends in regard of me: I feel more my insufficiency, and the need of being daily ordained of Christ to preach his gospel; and I shall value the more the worth of my privilege with you, please God I return safely to you. I had yesterday a most advantageous offer made of going free cost to my own country, (i. e. France,) to see my mother, brothers, and sisters in the flesh, whom I have not

seen

seen for near eighteen years, but I find my relations in the spirit are nearer and dearer to me than my relations in the flesh: I have therefore refused the kind offer, that I might return among you, and be comforted by the mutual faith of you and me.

I hope, my dear brethren, that you improve much under the ministry of that faithful servant of God Mr. B- —, whom Providence blesses you with; make haste to gather the honey of knowledge and grace as it drops from his lips, and may I find the hive of your heart so full of it at my return, that I may share with you in the heavenly store. In order to this, intreat the Lord to stir up your hunger and thirst after Jesus' flesh and blood, and to increase your desire for the sincere milk of the word. When people are hungry they will find time to go to their meals; and a good appetite doth not think that a meal a day is too much: as you go to spiritual meals forget not to pray all the way, and to feast your souls in hopes of hearing some good news from heaven, and from Jesus, the faithful loving friend which you have there; and when you return home, be sure to carry the unsearchable riches of Jesus's dying and rising love to your houses, in the vessel of a believing heart; let light be attended with warmth of love. Be not you satisfied in knowing the way to heaven, but walk in it immediately, constantly, and joyfully; be all throughly in earnest. You may impose upon your brethren by a formal attendance on the means of grace, but you cannot deceive the searcher of hearts. Let him then see your hearts struggling towards him, and if you fall through heaviness, sloth, or unbelief, do not you make a bad matter worse by continuing hopeless in the ditch of sin and guilt. Up and away to the fountain of Jesus blood, it

will

will not only wash away the guilt of past sins, but strengthen you to trample all iniquity under foot for the time to come. Never forget that the soul of the diligent shall be made fat, and that the Lord will spue the lukewarm out of his mouth. Get therefore that love which makes you diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

You know the way to get this love is, 1st. To consider the mercy of God; 2dly, be frequently, if not continually, plying this faith with all the attention of your minds, and fervour of your hearts, "Lord, I am lost, but Christ hath died!" 3dly, to try actually to love as you can, by setting your affections on Christ whom you see not, and for his sake, on your brethren whom you see; 4thly, to use much private prayer for yourselves and others, and to try to keep up communion with God, and with your absent brethren.

I beg, in order to this, that you will not neglect the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is; and when you meet in society, be neither backward nor forward to speak; esteem yourselves every one the meanest in the company, be glad to sit at the feet of the lowest; if you are tempted against any one, yield not to the temptation, and pray for much of that love which hopeth all things, and puts the best constructions even upon the worst of things. I beg for Christ's sake I may find no division and no offence among you at my return. If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels of mercy, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself. I earnestly beg the continuance of your pray-

ers for me, both as a minister, and as your companion in tribulation; as in particular, that the Lord would keep me from hurting his cause in these parts, and that when Providence shall bring me back among you, which I hope will be this day fortnight, I may be thoroughly furnished for every good word and work. That the blessing of God in Christ Jesus, may crown all your hearts and your meetings, is the earnest prayer of, my very dear brethren,

Your unworthy servant in the gospel
of our common Lord,

J. F.

P. S. I had not time to finish this letter yesterday, being called upon to preach in a market town in the neighbourhood. The dragon shewed some of his spite and venom to little purpose. A gentleman church-warden would hinder me getting into the pulpit; and in order to this, cursed and swore, and took another gentleman by the collar in the middle of the church. Notwithstanding his rage, I preached; may the Lord raise in power, what was sown in weakness.

LETTER LXI.

Oakhall, Suffex, Sept. 23, 1766.

To those who love or fear the Lord Jesus at M——
——, ——, grace, peace, and love, be multiplied unto you, from our God and Saviour Jesus Christ!

PROVIDENCE, my dear brethren, called me so suddenly from among you, that I had not time

time to take my leave of you, and recommend myself to your prayers; but I hope the good spirit of our God, which is a spirit of love and supplication, hath brought me to your remembrance, as the poorest and weakest of Christ's ministers, and consequently as him whose hands stand most in need of been strengthened and lifted up by your prayers. Pray on then for yourselves, for one another, and for him whose glory is to minister unto you in spiritual things, and whose sorrow it is not to do it in a manner more suitable to the majesty of the gospel, and more profitable to your souls. My heart is with you nevertheless I bear patiently this bodily separation for three reasons.

I. The variety of more faithful and abler ministers which you have during my absence, is more likely to be serviceable to you than my presence among you, and I would always prefer your profit to my satisfaction.

II. I hope Providence will give me those opportunities of conversing and praying with a greater variety of experienced christians, which will tend to mine own improvement, and I trust in the end, to yours.

III. I flatter myself, that after some weeks absence, my ministry will be recommend by the advantage of novelty, which (the more the pity) goes farther with some than the word itself. In the mean time, I shall give you some advice, which it may be, will prove both suitable and serviceable to you.

1. Endeavour to improve daily under the ministry that Providence blesses you with: be careful to attend it with diligence, faith, and prayer. Would it not be a great shame, if when ministers come thirty or forty miles off to offer you peace and par-

don, ſtrength and comfort, in the name of God, any of you ſhould ſlight the glorious meſſage, or hear it as if it was nothing to you, and as if you heard it not? See then, that you never come from a ſermon, without being more deeply convinced of ſin and righteouſneſs: in order to this,

2. Uſe much prayer before you go to church: conſider that your next appearance there, may be in a coffin; and entreat the Lord to give you now ſo to hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, that you may be filled therewith. Hungry people never go faſting from a feaſt. Call to mind the text I preached from the laſt Sunday but one, before I left you. *Wherefore laying aſide all malice, and all guile, and hypocriſy, and envies, and all evil-ſpeaking; as new-born babes, deſire the ſincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby*, 1 Pet. 2. 1.

3. When you are under the word, beware of ſitting as judges, and not like criminals; many judge of the manner, matter, voice, or perſon of the preacher; you perhaps judge all the congregation, when they ſhould judge themſelves guilty of eternal death, and yet worthy of eternal life, through the worthineſs of him, who ſtood and was condemned at Pilate's bar for them. The moment you have done crying to God as guilty, or thanking Chriſt as reprieved criminals, you have reaſon to conclude, that this advice is levelled at you.

4. When you have been at a means of grace, and do not find yourſelves ſenſibly quickened, let it be matter of deep humiliation to you. For want of repenting of their unbelief, and hardneſs of heart, ſome get into a habit of deadneſs and indolence, ſo that they come to be as inſenſible, and as little aſhamed of themſelves for it, as ſtones.

5. Beware

5. Beware of the inconſiſtent behaviour of thoſe, who complain that they are full of wandering in the evening under the word, when they have ſuffered their minds to wander from Chriſt all the day long. O! get acquainted with him, that you may walk in him, and with him. Whatſoever you do or ſay, eſpecially in the things of God, do or ſay it, as if Chriſt was before, behind, and on each ſide of you. Indeed he is ſo, whether you conſider it or not; for when he viſibly appeared on earth, he called himſelf the Son of Man which is in heaven; how much more then is he preſent on earth, now, that he makes his immediate appearance in heaven. Make conſcience then, to maintain a ſenſe of his bleſſed preſence all the day long, and all the day long you will have a continual feaſt; for can you conceive any thing more delightful, than to be always at the fountain of love, peace, beauty and joy; at the ſpring of power, wiſdom, goodneſs and truth? can there be a purer, and more melting happineſs, than to be with the beſt of fathers, the kindeſt of brothers, the moſt generous of benefactors, and the tendereſt of huſbands? now Jeſus is all this, and much more to the believing ſoul. O! believe my friends, believe in Jeſus now, through a continual now; and until you find you can thus believe, mourn over your unbelieving heart, drag it to him as you can; think of the efficacy of his blood ſhed for the ungodly, and wait for the ſpirit of faith from on high.

6. Some of you wonder why you can't believe; why you cannot ſee Jeſus with the eye of your mind, and delight in him with the affections of your heart. I apprehend the reaſon to be one of theſe, or perhaps altogether.

I. You are not poor, loſt, undone, helpleſs, deſpairing ſinners in yourſelves. You indulge ſpi-

ritual and refined self-righteousness; you are not yet dead to the law, and quite slain by the commandment. Now the kingdom of heaven belongs to none but the poor in spirit; Jesus came to save none but the lost. What wonder then, if Jesus is little to you, and if you do not live in his kingdom of peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost?

II. Perhaps you spend your time in curious reasonings, instead of casting yourselves as forlorn sinners at Christ's feet, leaving it to him to bless you, when, and in the manner and degree he pleases. Know that he is the wise and sovereign God, and that it is your duty to lie before him as clay, as fools, as sinful nothings.

III. Perhaps also, some of you wilfully keep idols of one kind or other: you indulge some sin against light and knowledge, and it is neither matter of humiliation nor confession to you. The love of praise, that of the world, that of money, and that of sensual gratifications, when not lamented, are as implacable enemies to Christ, as Judas and Herod. How can ye believe, seeing ye seek the honour that cometh from men? Hew then your Agags in pieces before the Lord; run from your Delilahs to Jesus resolutely; cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye that offend you: "Come from among them, and be separate, "saith the Lord, and I will receive you." Nevertheless, when you strive, take care not to make yourself a righteousness of your striving; remember that justifying righteousness is finished and brought in, and that your goodness can no more add to it than your sins diminish it. Shout then, "the Lord your righteousness;" and if you are undone sinners, humbly and yet boldly say, "in the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

When

7. When I was in London, I endeavoured to make the beſt of my time; that is to ſay, to hear, receive, and practiſe the word. Accordingly, I went to Mr. Whitfield's tabernacle, and heard him give his ſociety a moſt ſweet exhortation upon love. He began by obſerving that when the apoſtle St. John was old, and paſt walking and preaching, he would not forſake the aſſembling himſelf with the brethren, as the manner of too many is upon little or no pretences at all; on the contrary, he got himſelf carried to their meeting, and with his laſt thread of voice, preached to them his final ſermon made up of this one ſentence, "My little children, love one another." I wiſh, I pray, I earneſtly beſeech you to follow that evangelical, apoſtolical advice; and till God makes you all little children, little in your own eyes, and ſimple as little children; give me leave to ſay, my dear brethren, love one another, and of courſe, judge not, provoke not, be not ſhy of one another, but bear ye one another's burthens, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt; yea, bear with one another's infirmities, and do not eaſily caſt off any one, not for ſin, except it be obſtinately perſiſted in.

My ſheet is full, and ſo is my heart of good wiſhes for, and ſtrong longings after you all. I have juſt room to tell you, I hope to be with you in three or four weeks time. O let me have the comfort of finding you all believing and loving. Farewell, my dear brethren: the bleſſing of God be with you all; this is the earneſt deſire of

Your unworthy miniſter,

J. F.

LET-

LETTER LXII.

To Miss H———.

YOU seem not to have a clear idea of the happiness of the love of Jesus, or at least of your privilege of loving him again: your dullness of private prayer arises from the want of a familiar friendship with Jesus; to obviate which, go to your closet, as if you was going to meet the dearest friend you ever had; cast yourself immediately at his feet, bemoan your coldness before him, extol his love to you, and let your heart break with a desire to love him till it can actually melt with his love; be importunate, and get your Lord to avenge you of your adversary, I mean your cold heart.

You ask some directions to get a mortified spirit; in order to get it, get recollected. Recollection is a dwelling with one's self, and being abstracted from creatures towards God: it is outward and inward: outward recollection consists, first, in silence, which cuts of superfluous words, speaks of necessity, and that for the glory of God: secondly, in solitude, or a being wisely disentangled from the world, a keeping quietly to one's business, or a shutting the door of one's senses; in an inward deep attention to Jesus' love, and in a continual care of entertaining holy thoughts, for fear of spiritual idleness. Through the power of the spirit, let recollection be steady even in the midst of hurrying business. Secondly, let it be calm and peaceable. Thirdly, let it be lasting: *Watch and pray, lest you enter into*

into temptation. In order to this, beware of engaging too deep and beyond neceſſity into outward things; of being captivated or entangled in heart by any troubleſome worldly deſire or affection; of wilfully committing ſmall faults. Recollection appears vaſtly neceſſary; becauſe for want of it, prayer is uſeleſs, imagination and wanderings prevail, the heart gets looſe and roves every where; whereas we paſs eaſily from recollection to delightful prayer again. Without recollection, we cannot find out nor cruſh ſin in its firſt riſings; therefore it will break out in every unmortified perſon. To this I might add, that without recollection, we cannot know or deny ourſelves to any purpoſe. In recollection, let your mind act according to grace, it will probably lead you, either to contemplate on Jeſus crucified, dying, riſing, interceding. Fourthly, watch your ſenſes, ſuppreſs your paſſions. Fifthly, keep before God, in reſpectful ſilence of heart. Sixthly, watch and follow the motions of grace, and feed on the promiſes.

But take care here, 1ſt. To be more taken with thoughts of God, than yourſelf. 2dly, To conſider, how hardly recollection is got ſometimes, and how eaſily loſt. 3dly, Not to uſe much forced labour to raiſe a particular frame. 4thly, Not to fret, tire, nor grow impatient, if you have no comfort; but meekly to acquieſce and confeſs yourſelf unworthy of any, determining quietly to wait for the ſmiles of Jeſus. The following motives may ſtir you up to the purſuit of recollection: 1ſt. We muſt forſake all, and die to all firſt by recollection; 2dly, Without which, God's voice can't be heard in the ſoul. 3dly, It is the only altar on which to offer our Iſaacs. 4thly, It is inſtrumentally a ladder (if I may ſo ſpeak) to

aſcend

aſcend into God. 5thly, It is the rendezvous of God and the ſoul. 6thly, By it, the ſoul gets to its centre; out of it, it is reſtleſs. 7thly, Man's ſoul is the temple of God: recollection, the holy of holies. 8thly, As the wicked by recollection find hell in their breaſts, ſo faithful ſouls heaven. 9thly, Without it, all means of grace prove uſeleſs, or make but a ſlight impreſſion. 10thly, Recollection empties the ſoul that God may fill it.

I give you theſe hints, not to ſet Chriſt aſide, but that you may, according to the light and power given, take the ſtone and place it upon the chief corner ſtone: cement them with the blood of Jeſus, 'till the ſuperſtructure in ſome meaſure anſwers the excellency of the foundation.

J. F.

LETTER LXIII.

My very dear Friend,

I Came to this place on Saturday laſt, in company with Mr. C. and Mr M. we had a good journey. We ſpent our time in converſing upon the things appertaining to the kingdom of God, in the moſt ſolemn and devout manner we could; and at intervals ſung a few verſes of an hymn, the whole attended with mental prayer, by theſe means we came here, not only with a good conſcience, but forwarded in our ſpiritual journey. It is a good thing to have only one buſineſs on earth, to make our calling and election ſure; and only one end in view, to glorify God.

We had a love-feaſt at * * on Sunday evening, at which there were near eight hundred precious ſouls

ſouls preſent. Our Lord was with us, and it made the place where we were aſſembled the houſe of God, and the gate of heaven indeed. *Oh! how amiable are thy tabernacles, thou Lord of hoſts!*

Moſt that were preſent had reaſon to thank God for the great conſolation, and one received remiſſion of ſins! we parted on Monday morning with tears, tho' in expectation of ſeeing one another again ſhortly. That was fulfilled in us. "See how theſe Chriſtians love."

It greatly rejoices my heart to find a revival of the work of God in this place alſo. Brother M. is very lively, and preaches chriſtian perfection with all his might, and ſeveral are ſtirred up to ſeek more holineſs. On Saturday evening we had a private meeting with thoſe who deſire to go on to perfection. Some preſent ſpake largely of receiving the accompliſhment of the promiſes of God, by a ſimple act of faith; and ſaid believe, believe, altogether: I ſpoke my mind freely upon the neceſſity of waiting for the fulfilling of the great and precious promiſes, in a diligent uſe of all the means of grace, in mortifying the deeds of the body, and crucifying the fleſh with its affections and luſts: and vigouroufly doing good to the utmoſt of our power, and patiently ſuffering evil, at the ſame time having all our expectation from Chriſt, and our faith ſteadily fixt on the promiſes, I offered this to their conſideration as the moſt ſcriptural, and ſafe way of growing in grace and arriving at the meaſure of the ſtature of perfect men in Chriſt.

I find much comfort and edification in the company of your friend. I thank God for her example, and advice. The dear Lord Jeſus bleſs and reward her.

My ſoul is at preſent thirſting for more of God: I long for all his fullneſs: I pray for your abundant

dant prosperity; I wish the happiness of all mankind.

Let your heart be given every moment to God alone, and save as many thoughts as possible from all other things, to centre immediately in him. Strive to be little in your own eyes, and also in appearance. Oh! that we may drink more abundantly into the humble, simple, loving spirit of Christ!

I remain yours affectionately, &c.

LETTER LXIV.

Rev. and highly esteemed Sir, Aug. 10, 1741.

GLory be to God for his great goodness, for sparing me so long, in the outward profession of religion without the power, to let me see his great salvation through your preaching. I attended the field preaching at first, and not from curiosity; yet Mr ——'s preaching had little or no effect upon me. I used to say his discourses are irregular, yet at the same time I was ravished with the hymn sung before the sermon, and often thereby melted into tears of love and joy. But it pleased God to come nearer my heart, and draw me by a sermon you preached at Kennington from Psal. xl. 15. I was then convinced I never was in that state: another from you on the one thing needful, which I used to think I had chosen because I was outwardly religious, had the same effect upon me. I then saw clearly that to be religious, was to be renewed in the image of God. By the light my heavenly Father giveth me, I now perceive, when I look back at these things, how he was then

then drawing me to my Saviour: for ſometimes, when I was under the word, which I conſtantly attended, eſpecially when delivered by you, I have been in great joy, and thought well of my ſtate, that I had faith and forgiveneſs of ſins, at other times I doubted of it, yet was deeply convinced of my vileneſs, and deſerving nothing but God's wrath and eternal damnation: yet I reaſoned with ſome of our brethren that I might have forgiveneſs, and not have that feeling ſenſe of it. Lord how prone man is to juſtify himſelf! I wanted them to think me in a good ſtate, which only diſcovered my pride.

Some time after, I heard you at the barn at Deptford, preach on this very ſubject, which diſcourſe took me all to pieces: I was quite unhinged. Now ſaid I, to thoſe along with me, I ſhall from this time ſit down in the loweſt room, among thoſe who are juſt awakened. Yet ſuch was the ſtubbornneſs of my heart, it would not permit me to join with my brethren in ſinging hymns, as we came home.

I uſed to ſay, Mr. W. and Mr. N. are very credulous, to take you for ſaints, as ſoon as any of you can ſay you have received ſuch or ſuch a gift, and declare yourſelf to be juſtified: why here is ſuch a talking about gifts, if I was to receive a gift, I ſhould keep it to myſelf, without making ſuch a declaration. But God afterwards ſhewed me that herein I erred.

One time I argued with my brethren againſt being delivered from evil thoughts; but this the Lord was pleaſed to reveal to me the ſame night before our little company broke up. The words of our Lord came with power into my ſoul, even in a moment, by which I was convinced of this part of my miſtake: *Make the tree good, and its*

fruit will be good alſo. I immediately acknowledged the ſame, and ſhall never again have reaſon to doubt of that.

Thus my heavenly Father led me on till the Sunday morning before Chriſtmas day laſt, when he was pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf further unto me, and make me feel, and experience in my heart, the forgiveneſs of my ſins. I may truly ſay he found me when I ſought him not, for I know not a time when I went to the Foundery with more indifference: I uſed commonly to be there before the ſervice began, but then I well remember I had not any warm deſires in me. Mr. H——s was at that time diſcourſing upon the love of God; unexpectedly, in a moment, as quick as thought, I ſenſibly felt my heart open, I received his love, with a clear ſenſe of the pardon of my ſins: my ſoul burned with this manifeſtation, it was overflowed with love, and tears of joy ſtreamed from mine eyes. I felt myſelf inexpreſſibly changed: all unbelief was taken away, and my ſoul united unto God.

I was in ſuch a delightful ſtate, that inſtead (as I purpoſed) of keeping this gift to myſelf, I now wanted the ſervice to conclude, that I might tell thoſe who feared God, what he had done for my ſoul. The hymn at the concluſion added to my comfort, which was.

" Now I have found the ground wherein,
" Sure my ſoul's anchor may remain," &c.

I returned home very joyful, declaring what the Lord had done for my ſoul.

I went in the forenoon to White Chapel church, where I met with an explication of what I had received. The whole ſervice contributed to the confirmation of my faith. The Pſalms for the day began, *O give thanks unto the Lord, and call upon his*

his name, tell the people what things he hath done. Never was my heart more lifted up! never did I read these lines in this light before! *O let your songs be of him, and praise him, and let your talking be of all his wondrous works!* The collect of the day greatly concurred, "Grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight may never be reproved." The epistle also made me reckon myself no more a *stranger and foreigner, but a fellow citizen with the saints of the household of God.* The gospel also confirmed me in the words of St. Thomas, I said *my Lord and my God.*

Thus good sir, I have given some account of the great things God has done for me, and what I have already attained. Glory be unto his name for what he hath bestowed upon me. But alas! since then, I have oftner than once fallen into anger, which grieves his spirit. I am not yet, but I earnestly desire to be delivered from inward sin: it appears exceeding sinful; I feel my own helplessness, neither do I trust in any thing past. I often say,

"Gifts alas, cannot suffice,
And comforts all are vain;
While one evil thought can rise,
I am not born again:
Still I am not as my Lord,
Thy holy will I do not prove," &c.

I know my Saviour is able to help me, and I firmly believe he will carry on the work he has begun in my soul. I desire to wait his time and manner till I have full redemption, till I arrive at the *mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus:* 'till I am fully renewed in the image of God; till I am made a partaker of the divine nature, till *all old things are done away*, till I am *so born of God*, as *not to commit sin* in any mea-

ſure, till I am *ſanctified wholly in ſpirit, ſoul and body.*

And may the God of glory preſerve and bleſs your precious life long among us, and give you a double portion of his ſpirit; that after you have been the happy inſtrument of bringing many, very many ſons to glory, you may ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament in the kingdom of your Father for ever, is the prayer, Rev. Sir,

Of the unworthy A. I.

LETTER LXV.

Rev. Sir, Dec. 27, 1742

I Received your kind and pious Letter, and ſhould have wrote ſooner to acquaint you with my ſtate, ſince you was ſo good as to deſire it: but the reaſon why I deferred it was, my being out of all hope of receiving any benefit from any means. I have wearied all my friends and correſpondents with my vain complaints, and am now myſelf tired of complaining. The Almighty does not regard my languid ſinful prayers: he hath hid himſelf from me, and ſhut me up in thick darkneſs. My heart is hardned from his fear, nor can I ſee my want, nor mourn my miſery. I have not even a notional faith, nor any will, or endeavour to turn. The little ſpark of grace I once had is totally extinguiſhed, I have not any concern at all. I cannot ſee ſin, nor can I pray from my heart, either for myſelf or others: yet do I make a conſtant uſe of all the ordinances of Chriſt: I would not willingly commit any ſin, nor can I allow it in others, and am unwilling to bring a ſcandal upon the

the people of God. I should not think any duty too hard if my heart were but affected. But alas! woe is me, I am tyed down by a thousand, yea ten thousand chains, and can no more lift up my heart to God, than I can reach heaven with my finger. My soul is quite dead.

I was sometime ago wishing to be in this or that place, and still as my desires for God grew weaker, would wish I was but as I was the year, or month, or week before: but now I cannot have any sense of my loss. The brethren here have prayed for me, but I am still more hard and more blind. I have no notion of death, or hell, or judgment, or eternity; nor have I any sense of the law of God. If at any time I have a faint remembrance of the grace I once had, how I was affected some years since, and find some sorrow for the loss of my Saviour; or if a verse of an hymn affects me, and forces a tear from my flinty heart, yet it continues not, but is like a flash of lightning immediately gone.

I greatly long to see you, or your brother here: perhaps the word might come again with power to my soul. I am yet alive, therefore I will not say it is impossible for God to change even me: some miracle of grace may make even me a monument of mercy; I would fain see my wants, and mourn my sins, and grieve under the burden of my woe: for I cannot conceive it possible I should love Christ without extremity of need compels me to it. O wretched soul, this is thy sad condition! I cannot find any way of returning, for I cannot repent: I have several times fervently prayed for one beam of light, but have found no answer.

In short, I have taken a great deal of pains to destroy myself; the more I strove, the more I

was entangled. I know I formerly ſought God ſincerely, but when I endeavoured to give up my whole heart unto him, the devil laid all his ſnares for me, and I am now his captive. I have betrayed my ſoul by endeavouring to preſerve it. Their condition is preferable to mine, who live in open profaneneſs: for were they once convinced of their danger, they would gladly embrace the Saviour; but I have a double vail upon my heart: and if I periſh my puniſhment will be far greater. When I look upon myſelf in this light, I do think there is not a more wretched creature breathing. I wander about like a deſolate exile. I have loſt my reaſon, and my underſtanding is taken from me. I have no peace, but a fearful expectation of judgment. Oh! that the Son of God would look upon me in my loſt eſtate, and force me to be ſaved by grace! if I ſhould be reſtored again I will prize his mercy; and ſurely then I ſhall ſerve him all the reſt of my days. But, O 'tis a ſad thing when one cannot repent, or even ſincerely deſire it! my hands hang down.

I have a thought ſometimes to caſt off the form, ſince I have loſt the power of religion. I would fain die, if death would ſet me free; but I am not willing to quit all hopes of heaven.

I beg you will enquire of the Lord for me, and wreſtle with him in my behalf, and if my day of grace is not yet over, O beſeech him to give me the comfort of his help again, and that his ſpirit may ſtrive with me. I ſent a letter to this purpoſe to Mr. M—— a fortnight ago, but received no anſwer. Perhaps the Lord ſhewed him I was loſt, and he might be unwilling to tell me ſo. But I beg Mr. W——s would join with you in prayer, and let me know what the Lord will ſay concerning me. I ſhall impatiently wait the anſwer,

swer, for I would fain know the worst. I will yet wait upon the Lord, if I perish, I will not perish for want of asking: I will draw near unto God with my lips, tho' my heart is far from him.

Thus I have given you a description of hell upon earth: but I am confident you will not think much to labour for my soul, or angrily reproach my unprofitableness, notwithstanding the good advice you have often given me, seems to be lost upon me. I have spun this to an unreasonable length, but I hope you will excuse my weakness,

Who am your most unworthy Servant, A. N.

P. S. I have just received a most comfortable letter from Mr. M-----d; it has given me hope that I, even I shall yet know and love Jesus Christ.

LETTER LXVI.

Rev. Sir,

I Know your love and care for our souls is great, and therefore I send you these few lines to inform you how the blessed Jesus deals with us: I find my soul grow stronger and stronger in the Lord daily. He hath given me to eat of the *hidden manna, and the tree of life*, and given me *the white stone, with the new name written therein, which none know save those who receive it*: and hath revealed himself unto me, in the manner he doth not unto the world. My soul is joined to Christ. I can pray without ceasing. The love of God is abundantly shed abroad in my soul; yet I continually hunger and thirst for more. O how I desire to do the will of God on earth, as angels do it in heaven! the Lord hath given me to believe that

that whatsoever I ask the Father in the name of Jesus he will do it for me. I feel his word and promise applied: he does give me what I ask. O that I could express the love I feel to God, and all mankind: I could freely lay down my life for the salvation of any one sinner in the world. Great and inexpressible is that love wherewith Jesus loveth us. Sweet to my soul are all his commands. If at any time I have any temptation to break any of them, my whole heart riseth up against it; and for the love I have unto the lawgiver, and to the purity of his law, I would rather die than break the least commandment. How can I offend so loving and gracious a Saviour. I would not do any thing which might displease my heavenly Father. In all things wherein I see the will of God, he enables me to do it joyfully.

I am always less or more happy in the Lord. Indeed sometimes I think there is something like a vail which covers that great glory of the Lord, which at other times I see: but I then lie at the Saviour's feet, and wait till he gives me that sight of his glorious face again. I am never without him, but sometimes he does fill my soul so much with his lovely presence, that my body can scarcely bear it, and I cannot at all express it.

Within these few days I have had a peculiar sense of my unworthiness, and such a sinking into humility as I have not always; so that I think myself utterly unworthy to lie at the feet of Christ: if I could find any place near unto him, lower than this, I would lie there. But he has honoured me with a place at his dear feet, and his wings overshadow me, and keep me from all storms. O that I could praise him sufficiently!

Dear Sir, remember me in your prayers, and praises: and may Jesus Christ continually bless you.

you. I believe he will. O faithful shepherd of the flock! your feet are beautiful wherever you carry the glad tidings of peace. Blessed be your goings out, and comings in; your rising up, and your lying down. May Jesus be with you for ever and ever.

From your unworthy Friend in Christ Jesus,
E. V.

LETTER LXVII.

My dear Brother,

I Received your Letter, and I heartily wish the Lord may manifest himself unto you this day, and give you his spirit to bear witness with your spirit that you are a son of God. I beg of you, rest not night or day, till you rest in Jesus Christ. Let me also entreat you to hear and cleave unto Mr. W. for I assure you he is a good man, and I, and many souls in this country were greatly blessed in hearing the word of the Lord from his mouth.

When I came down here, I found the people running from town to town, and not one in fifty knew what they went for: but when I told them what God had done for my soul, they cried, *away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live.*

Mr. I—— sent for me, and seemed much offended that I was so bold, but the Lord put words in my mouth that he could not gainsay: and indeed all that came to dispute with me, whether Pr———ns, or still ones, were not able to confute what I said, though they would not be convinced by it. And though there was not a man in these

parts

parts that would agree to what I ſaid, even when I proved it agreeable to the word of God, yet he has given me ſuch a witneſs of his love that if all men in the world were to oppoſe me, they could not ſhake my ſoul. I reſt on my Lord's words, for he has ſaid, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* Seeing that the Lord hath made uſe of ſuch a weak worm as me, and has given me to love all his creatures, ſo that I cannot deſire the death of a fly or worm, and a burning zeal for all men's ſouls, I will run and not faint.

When Mr. W. began to preach out of the churches, in Moorefields and Kennington-Common, I was deeply convinced of my loſt condition, and felt in myſelf the ſentence of condemnation, when the dear Saviour of ſinners ſpake peace to my ſoul: and ever ſince he has continued unto me ſome ſight and ſenſe of his love; though for a year or more I was ſometimes brought very low, and at other times I have been ſo full of love, that tears of joy have flowed from my eyes, to think that Jeſus would love and look upon ſuch a wretch as me. A little before I came from London I was at St. Paul's, at the ſacrament, as I kneeled before him, the love of God was ſo great in my heart, that I thought I ſhould have fallen to the ground, and from that time I have had a ſteadfaſt confidence, and a laſting peace: and no other doctrine than that I heard from the beginning, hath any place in my mind unto this day.

I deſire that you, and all the brethren would pray that I may ſtand faſt unto the end. The Lord works very viſibly and powerfully among us: we have freſh tokens of his grace every week, yea in ſome weeks ſix or ſeven are brought to the knowledge of ſalvation by the remiſſion of their ſins; and many who have been deſpiſers, are now thank-

ing

ing God who hath opened their eyes. The Lord generally maketh a ſhort work among us; ſome have found the glad tidings experimentally true in three times hearing.

At my coming into this country, no man ſtood with me, but my name was caſt out by profeſſors and profane, ſo that I was like an owl in the deſert; but a few who were bruiſed by the hand of God ſoon heard of, and received the doctrine of conſcious pardon, and in a little time ſeven of them found it verified in themſelves: but Mr. I—m reproved them for confeſſing it before the world: accordingly he ſent for me, and deſired me not to ſpeak ſo boldly, it would make the country uſe us ill. I told him if every man in the world was to caſt ſtones at me, I would tell what God had done for my ſoul, and what he is willing to do for others: for I loved all mankind, and feared no man.

The people of the neighbouring towns have frequently ſent for me, to hear of this new doctrine: for they were quite ſure that no man could know his ſins forgiven in this world. But I proved it from the written word of God, and from the doctrine of the church of England. In a little time many cried out, "Lord grant this thing unto me!" Our number of believers ſoon increaſed to thirty; then I found I muſt ſpeak publicly among them, for the people thronged, and filled my houſe. In this I found cowardlineſs in my fleſh, and craved for death, or that God would take my ſpeech from me rather than call me to it: but ſtill I found my mind full of matter, and when I ſpoke, the people ſtarted as if I had thrown fire-brands at them. So the Lord ſetting to his ſeal, and owning the word, I had not any excuſe; then I ſaid, Lord, if thou ſendeſt me to hell to preach to devils, thy

will

will be done. At the people's requeſt, I now preach every night in the week in general, and the work increaſes much, and yet I am (in a ſenſe) alone. I want to have ſome correſpondence with Mr. W——y, my heart is knit to him, as the heart of one man, and ſo are many of the children which God has called by my mouth. Some of them indeed faileth into ſtillneſs, and they ſay I have the ſpirit of conviction, but not the gift of building up of ſouls: but however thoſe who ſtand faſt as they received Chriſt, they are more holy and happy, and ſo I think as well built up.

I beg you would let Mr. W——y know how all is with us, and deſire him to pray for me, for I owe myſelf unto him: entreat him to ſend me a letter, and let me know his mind of theſe matters. Give my kind love to all friends with you: I ſhould be glad to hear from you.

I remain your unworthy Brother in Chriſt,

J. N.

LETTER LXVIII.

Rev. Sir, May 4th, 1742.

WHEN you left Briſtol I had a great ſight of the promiſed land, and ſurely I did taſte of the fruit thereof: but now it ſeems at a greater diſtance, yet I cannot doubt but my Lord will appear the ſecond time, without ſin unto ſalvation, and it may be very ſuddenly. O that I may be found watching! ſometimes I find my ſoul ſo poor and heavy, ſo dull, and naked of ſpiritual comfort, that I have nothing left but a ſenſe of pardoning love: Yet at ſuch times I have found a greater reſignation

resignation to the will of God, than at some others.

I earnestly long to do the will of my heavenly Father None but the searcher of hearts knows how my soul thirsts to love and obey him. My spirit groans to be delivered from the bondage of corruption: I want to be nearer to Christ and to become one spirit with him, in a fuller sense of the word, than I have yet attained.

Since the beginning of last week I have had, almost continually, a sinking and depression in my spirit, attended with an inward trembling, which so affects my body, as if my life was departing from me. O that it might be a symptom of the old man's death. O that Christ might be fully formed in me. This close exercise of mind brings such a lowness of spirit, and inward mourning, that my heart seems to bleed with contrition, and I could be content to weep my life away at the feet of Jesus: in the midst of this I find settled peace, and solid comfort.

In this state, I do not find I can ask, or desire joy or grief, light or darkness. but to be kept from offending God, and empowered to use, as I ought, the talents he gives me, that they may answer the ends of his glory, my advantage, and his people's good. I never see the power of God more visibly, than when it is perfected in my weakness, in doing the least good to any other: for many times I cannot help asking pardon of my Lord for my poor, yea sinful manner of performing my duty in any respect; and especially in admonishing and reproving others: and yet the Lord doth frequently bless to others, those labours I have need to repent of, myself. At the present I find such self-abasement, as makes me hateful to myself when others speak well of me.

I find I can now declare my mind unto you with great freedom, as frequently I can in writing unto others; and though I speak from the overflowing love, and great abundance of my heart, yet I am afraid least this should be a means of their thinking of me above what I really am. I am so full of weaknesses and infirmities, that I fear least my conversation should rather be a stumbling-block, than an agreeable example. I have often reflected upon myself for my being less watchful at some other times, than when in your presence. If I always saw myself as seen by my maker, I should not be liable to these changes. I could at this time tell you the inmost secrets of my heart; and I could be willing that there were a window opened in my breast, that all the children of God might see every thing which passes there.

It is not so easy a matter to discover the state of another, by the strictest personal examination, as by a daily observation of their behaviour in their respective callings, how they spend their time in private, and whether they buy up every opportunity of doing good. If our soul is but yet partly renewed in the image of God, there is not any time for trifling; and if it is wholly renewed, there is not any inclination unto it, but an insatiate desire of doing every thing for God. They say, my Father worketh hitherto, and I work. O that none of us who have received grace, may ever be guilty of wasting our Lord's goods, or neglecting the improvement of the talents we have delivered unto us. But, O Lord, grant that we may be burning and shining lights, and adorn thy gospel in all things. O that I may be a pearl in your crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

I am your unworthy Friend in Christ,

S. D.

LET-

LETTER LX.

Rev. and dear Sir, August 23, 1742.

I Desire to praise the Lord, I find he is still with me, and I trust he will continue with me in all my temptations. When the enemy comes in as a flood, the spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him: when troubles are at hand, I go and fall down before him and humbly ask his help, and he comforts me with his love, and makes a way for my escape, so that I am able to bear them. I am happy beyond all expression when I feel and know that Jesus loves me, even me, a poor, weak, sinful creature: I am frequently unfaithful, and at every turn grieving the holy Spirit, and yet his love is not taken from me, but very great toward me. I pray I never may be left to my own deceitful heart, for then I shall run into all manner of wickedness, but may I be kept by thy power, O Lord, *through faith unto full salvation.*

Dear Sir, the time, I believe is hastening on, when I shall *rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks, for this is the will of* God *in Christ Jesus concerning me.* The hope of this is a blessing unto me, it lifts my fainting spirits up, and quickens every power of my mind. Last Sunday I was at St Paul's, I felt the love of God so shed abroad in my heart, as I cannot express, and such sweetness, and joy in my soul, as my tongue can never explain. *Indeed his name was as ointment poured forth:* and this I can truly say

"Thy name a sweeter odour cast,
"Than Lebanon with cedars grac'd."

I had such glorious thoughts and apprehensions of God as I never had in all my life before: and surely I had a taste of that perfect love of God, with which I hope to be filled to all eternity. O how I long for the meek and lowly mind which is also in Christ! then, only then shall I find rest to my soul.

I have many trials and temptations, and sometimes I am afraid I shall fall by them. *Without are fightings and within are fears*; but I pray to be delivered from the plague of my own heart, which is worse than any thing else to me, and I find help. I beg you would also pray for me that I may not faint in the end, but that I may run with steady patience, the race set before me; always looking unto Jesus who has been the author until he become the finisher of my faith.

My master's behaviour is often a very great burthen and trial to me, yet even in this, when I look to Jesus, I am a conqueror. One or other of the still brethren are often with him, and I think he seems to incline to their way very much, he says there is much sweetness and love among them. When I tell him what I think of him, he tells me, I cannot see all things clearly yet, and what is sin to me may not be so to him: I think by this rule one might have an excuse for the breach of any commandment. That which is sinful in itself, is sinful to every one who does it. But I leave them to their own master to stand or fall; although I know by experience, to be in their company, is hurtful to me.

I desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, and simply to love and follow him whithersoever he goeth, through fire and water, and all trials he may permit to come upon me till he brings me into the wealthy place. I trust he will

will give me power to deny myself, and take up my cross daily. I have yet many foolish, and hurtful desires; but the strongest is that of following Jesus; and I say of the other, *these* shall *he destroy by the spirit of his mouth, and by the brightness of his appearing*. I am less than the least of all my father's children, yet I trust I shall be a jewel in the Lord's cabinet, and your crown of rejoicing in that day which is approaching. I should be glad of a few lines from you, if it was the Lord's will, if not, his will be done. May the Lord direct and bless you in all you do and say, and fill you with the blessing of the gospel of peace.

I am your unworthy Sister, &c.

E. H.

LETTER LXI.

My dear Friend,

HItherto God has helped me! I still desire to be inwardly, and perfectly, sanctified, united to Christ, filled with God, and guided by the Holy Ghost. I delight in God above all temporary good, yet I have not perfect love, I have not received the little child in the name of Jesus! My conceptions of christian perfection; may be sometimes too high, and at other seasons too low. The more I know of God and myself, the more I am sensible that I know little of either! Love is that by which I understand most of his nature. Light is that whereby I conceive best of his glory. O! what need of faith, to cast down reasonings! and of divine love to satisfy the empty and hungry soul! Christian conversation has been eminently blest to

me; and now that I am in a great measure deprived of it, I pray that Jesus would manifest himself to me more than ever. May he convince me of what is wrong in my heart, and manner of life; and yet if he did not sustain me, this conviction would be intolerable! I hope you, and my other dear friends pray for me. O! that I may be found faithful. My kindest love to —— &c. peace, be with you; and may I see you again that we may praise the Lord together.

I am your affectionate Brother, &c.

T. W.

LETTER LXII.

My dear Brother,

THE late conversation we had, together with your favour in writing caused much unity of spirit with you. I have often thought the wisdom and understanding which God has given you, will prove in effect a misfortune, unless you are careful to join with them the simplicity of a little child; since you must necessarily lose much of the sweet conversation of the simple followers of the Lamb from the very notion they have of you.

I know you clearly see that all gifts without charity will profit you nothing, and I trust your continual prayer to God is, that with all his other blessings, he would increase in you abundantly even this grace of the Spirit.

I know the will of God concerning you is that you should be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. With respect to your present trials, you may remember I told you I was not altogether a stranger

to

to it, from the apprehenſion of its being e'er long my own caſe, and therefore I have inured myſelf to the loſs of any or all things if the Lord call me to it.

One day in my retired moments, the language of my heart was, " Lord I cannot bear ſuch and ſuch a trial with the grace I have, I pray thee give me more;" and that ſcripture was applied with great clearneſs, " I will be a father to the fatherleſs, and defend the cauſe of the widow." O may the Lord give you to feel from thoſe bleſſed words what he did to unworthy me: I had not the leaſt ſcruple left, but was enabled fully to caſt my care upon the Lord. I know my God ſhall ſupply all my wants out of his abundant fullneſs! doubt not my brother, but that he whoſe you are, and whom you ſerve, will be with you, and when you paſs through the fire it ſhall not burn you, neither ſhall the waters overflow you: this dark and cloudy day ſhall e'er long end in ſunſhine! only be faithful, be obedient.

At preſent my huſband and child are in a bad ſtate of health. The Lord is viſiting both your houſe, and mine; and this I am certain of, it is in great love to our ſouls! he will have us paſs thro' and thro' the fire, till we leave all our droſs, and come forth more pure than fine gold! May the gracious deſigns of a dear Redeemer be anſwered upon us for his names ſake!

My kind love to your dear wife, if in the land of the living: tell her ſhe has reaſon to bleſs the Lord from the riſing of the ſun to the going down thereof.

He is cutting ſhort his work in righteouſneſs. He is about to take her from the evil to come! the angels are hovering round her, to do their laſt and moſt delightful office! to convey her ſoul into

into Abraham's bosom! then all will be broad eternity! all light! all love! then her happy spirit shall sweetly mingle with those around the throne, and sing hallelujah to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever. I trust our prayers to God for you will not be wanting,

From your affectionate Sister in Christ.

LETTER LXIII.

Dear and worthy Sir, July 27, 1742.

I Very heartily embrace this opportunity of writing my mind unto you, to inform you what the Lord has been doing for, and in my soul. Since I was with you in Branford, we began our march, and such a one I never had before. When I came to my quarters the first night, I had not any place of secrecy for prayer: but I made a closet of the necessary place, and Christ made a paradise of it unto me. Here I met my divine master. He is no respecter of places, more than persons. I could have been contented to have made that place which was my closet, and my paradise, my bed also, for the inexpressible sweetness I felt in the presence and love of my Redeemer.

The next night when I came to my quarters, I was, if possible, many times more happy than before. O the sweet presence of Christ which I there found! I cannot forbear to speak of it, and yet an angelic tongue cannot describe it. What wondrous work is this he hath done in my poor heart! I am as if I was filled with the love of God, and swallowed up with the thoughts of God, and his love towards me! when I think of his

his having fixed his love on such a vile unworthy creature as me, who by nature was as black as hell, I am melted into tears. O the love of Christ to poor sinners! he is fairer than the sons of men: yea he is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. I was going on in the broad way to destruction, but he prevented me by the blessings of his goodness: if he had not had compassion on me, where should I have landed? surely I must have landed in hell. O my dear Lord, how shall I mourn for my sins; how shall I praise thee for the pardon of them! consider O my soul the countless multitudes of benefits thy God has bestowed upon thee, and be thou confounded and ashamed of thy ingratitude.

I entreat almighty God to give me help, that I may press forward toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. For I am not to rest in any thing, or in any measure of grace attained on this side of heaven; but still be seeking after farther discoveries of Christ, until I enter within the vail, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary enjoy an everlasting rest. O for perfect freedom from sin! yet it cleaves unto me in all my duties; I cannot get rid of it, however I shall one day be free

I had only one in the whole troop, who would converse and pray with me, and he is gone after the other: the dog is returned to his vomit, and the sow to her wallowing in the mire; so I am left alone among a company of bears and lions. But God is all-sufficient: he adds proportionate strength to my faith, for which I thank his dear name. I hope, dear Sir, you will excuse me in writing unto you, and take the trouble to read this, for I had no body to break my mind to. I would have got some body to have wrote for me,

to

to have done it better, but they would have thought me mad for writing so much nonsense. If you would be so kind as to send me two or three lines, they would be sweet as honey to me. So no more at present from

Your loving Brother and humble Servant,

J. H.

LETTER LXIV.

Rev. Sir, October 2, 1742.

GOD has been pleased to make my journey much shorter than I expected when I left you. When I met my sisters in bond on Monday night, they all strove to comfort me under the cross. The day I set out two of them joined with me in prayer, and my soul was much comforted and strengthened: I resigned myself into the hands of God, looking upon myself to be stript of all outward helps, I cast myself upon the never-failing, and great mercies of God.

It was on Friday I set out, I found the Lord very present with me on the way. When I came to the inn on Saturday, I asked the maid whether they got time to go to church there, or no; she said they were to have liberty to go to church, but that they very seldom had. On Sunday I went to church, but thought it strange to hear a few singing, and all the rest unconcerned in the matter. When I returned back again, one asked me how I liked their church, I answered, there were but a few people in it which was a want. He then began monstrously to condemn the minister, and swear he could make as good a sermon himself.

ſelf. I told him if he was a preacher he would lead men to hell, not to heaven: his mouth was ſtopped, and he looked confounded, while all in the room looked one on another. After the evening ſervice I ſpent my time in reading, ſinging, and praying: my heart was in great peace, yet I could but mourn as a dove in my ſolitude. I ſeemed as a ſheep wandered from the fold, or as a branch cut off from the vine, or a member from the body: my heart is ſo united unto my ſiſters in band, that when I am from them, I think part of myſelf is wanting. O the bleſſedneſs of the communion of ſaints! I often think of the happineſs my brethren and ſiſters enjoy, and it cauſes me to grieve that I am abſent from them; which ſometimes makes me fear that I love the children of God better than their Father, and the means of grace better than the will or God. It is enough that Jeſus loveth me, and beareth me up in his arms. This ſight and ſenſe of God's preſence made me aſhamed of my grieving, and comforted me greatly: my heart was as melted wax, and my ſoul was much humbled before God.

On Monday I ſpake freely to two women in the waggon, one of which was a Scotch woman; ſhe told me the people of Scotland loved God, and kept the ſabbath ſo ſtrictly that one muſt not carry water through the ſtreets on that day. Indeed ſhe had a good deſire to be ſaved. I exhorted her to pray, and not faint, not even for wandering thoughts, of which ſhe complained. When I deſired the other not to ſwear, ſhe told me I ſhould quarrel with my huſband, if I would not let him ſwear.

When I met my huſband he could not ſpeak for joy to ſee me; I was alſo very glad to ſee him, but did not feel that great flutter in my breaſt, as I did

upon

upon any ſudden joy, before I was united to God. Many came to welcome me to Portſmouth, and profeſſed to be glad to ſee me; but when I opened my mouth to reprove them for ſwearing, they all fled away from me.

As ſoon as I was alone with my huſband he told me he had been in very great dangers at ſea: I aſked him, if he had been killed then, what would have been his everlaſting ſtate? "If I had died I ſhould have been ſaved for the ſake of Chriſt who died to redeem all men." I ſaid, do you think you deſerve hell? "No, my dear, for I do not ſwear "and game as bad as my companions." I told him, your heart is juſt the ſame with theirs, only the grace of God reſtrains you more than they; you have never done one good thing in your life, but has always ſinned againſt God continually: he was greatly ſtruck at that expreſſion, his heart condemned him, and he began to relent, and aſked if I had any petition to aſk of God in his behalf. I prayed with him with great freedom and enlargement of ſpirit, and confidence in God; his eyes were melted into many tears, and he ſaid, "I am "very wicked indeed. If I could live with you I "ſhould love God, but it is impoſſible on board "a man of war." I ſaid, all things are poſſible with God, *He is able to ſave unto the uttermoſt*, either by land or ſea. When he aſked me to ſee the Victory man of war, I told him if all the curioſities of the world could be brought together in one place, I would not loſe the time to ſee them, I could ſpend it better. In ſhort, I ſpake very freely unto him of the things appertaining to the kingdom of God.

He ſaid, he once read ſo much till he was almoſt melancholy at the ſight of his own wickedneſs, and had like to have gone into deſpair; he told the chap-

chaplain of it, who bid him leave off reading so much, and he would be well again: I told him the chaplain was not his friend, for that God was striving to bring him to a good state. He revealed his sins unto him that he might through penitence, and faith in Christ be forgiven. He said also, you once told me in one of your letters that you did not know till lately the nature of true religion, now you do: O that I might know the same, but if we so much as go to prayer here, we are laughed at and reviled; and how should one know religion, and be acquainted with God, if one has not opportunity to enquire of him in prayer? I answered, my dear, you should not be kept from prayer for the fear of being laughed at, for this would be the case if you were not on board a ship: I, you know am in London joined unto a society of people who are seeking the Lord, and the men of this world say all manner of evil of us falsely. So it was ever since the fall: persecution began in Cain, and it has been continued, in one way or other, ever since. If you was in London, and rose at five o'clock every morning, as I do, to hear the scriptures expounded, the men who know not God, would think you mad, therefore I say we must not be kept from religion by a little foolish laughter, or if we should suffer greater inconveniencies.

I was at Portsmouth only one day, and then set out for London again. I was in many temptations, but I prayed unto the Lord, and he strengthened me. First, satan tempted me to think my friends did not love me, but I thought if God loves me, it is enough: then he tempted me to laugh at idle things, and to say light words, I cried unto the Lord, *Lord save me or I perish*, and I found help in time of need. There were but two persons in company with me, I speak of their swearing

again and again, but with little ſucceſs. A ſtage-player came in by the way, when I reproved him, he ſaid nothing, but ſeemed in much confuſion.

When I came home my ſpirit rejoiced greatly. O how I love the ordinances and people of God! I have a ſmall trial, in want of work, but the trouble of it does not tarry long, I fly unto the Saviour, and he taketh it away. Yet the thoughts of my poor huſband's condition return upon me, and ſo oppreſs me that I am well nigh overcome. My ſoul is wonderfully drawn out in agonizing prayer for him. It may be the Lord will have compaſſion on him. Cries, and tears, and prayers ſhall not be wanting in his behalf.

Finally, the Lord, ſheweth me that my heart is polluted with all manner of ſin; I draw near unto him as a man full of diſeaſes to a phyſician from whom he expects help. I doubt not but his blood will heal all my maladies, and make me throughly whole. Now, when I pray my heart appeareth ſo unclean, compared with the holineſs of my Maker, that I am aſhamed, and bluſh before him, while I remain in profound ſilence, quite helpleſs at his feet. Here I deſire to be, here I am determined to wait, till the Lord maketh me as he will. Dear Sir, pray for

Your weakeſt daughter in Chriſt,

M. C.

LETTER LXV.

Rev. Sir, London, July 5, 1742.

THE following lines are the reſult of great joy which I almoſt continually feel in my heart:

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the Lord is now reviving and carrying on his work in my ſoul. I know that my Redeemer liveth, I feel that I have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of my ſins. His ſpirit is continually bearing witneſs with my ſpirit, that I am a child of God. I have not any doubts or fears reſpecting my ſtate. I feel a continual hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, and that I might partake more and more of the divine nature, of the power and fulneſs, and preſence of God. God's preſence on earth, is heaven begun; it is ſweet indeed to my ſoul, as marrow and fatneſs, ſweeter than honey or the honey comb. O that I might always enjoy the light of his countenance! O that my ſoul might always be enflamed with divine love! I do always love him in ſome meaſure, but I wiſh to love him more abundantly. I would have my ſoul changed into the nature of love. I want to be like the angels above. My continual prayer is, that I may not commit ſin, but that the Lord would accompliſh in me his will, by reſtoring me *unto the meaſure of the ſtature of a perfect man in* Chriſt: *by creating me after himſelf; and ſanctifying me wholly in body, ſoul, and ſpirit.*

At intervals I find ſome hidings, ſome withdrawing of God's preſence from me: but O what an aching void do I then feel in my ſoul! I am then reſtleſs, and importunate in my deſires and endeavours after God till he return. At ſuch times I feel as if it was a worm gnawing my ſoul; and nothing in the univerſe can give me any eaſe or ſatisfaction. The effect this has upon me is, I ſee the emptineſs of the whole creation, without the Creator; I feel myſelf to be nothing but a heap of vanity and confuſion. I find no remedy but crying, *God be merciful unto me,* and help me a poor ſinner.

I desire to give glory to the grace of God, I now feel much power over outward and inward sin: far greater power than I have had for some years, even from the time I was in my first love. "O my Lord and my God, do thou continue to bestow on me thy poor helpless creature, this power continually: yea, do thou augment and encrease it day by day."

I am deeply convinced of the necessity of a pure heart, a single eye, and a new creation: yea rather I am convinced of the impossibility of my soul being happy without it. For indeed I can relish no other happiness, but what consists in the love of God, and in being like unto him, and in acting conformably to his will. None of the trifling vanities, or little perishing things of this world, can satisfy the great desires of my immortal spirit. The Lord hath given me a foretaste of heavenly delight, in contemplating the amiable perfections of the divine nature, and feeling my soul exhilarated by his loving presence, which has kindled such a flaming desire in my spirit for God, as can never be satisfied but with all his fullness. There is something in me continually craving. There seems to be an emptiness in me, a lack of something essential to my soul's happiness: which lack, I well know is the perfect stature of a man in Christ. It is that alone can make me happy. The want of which is the cause of these pantings, these desires, these achings and strong appetites, which do perpetually put me upon crying unto the Lord that he would transfer his image to my soul. That he would destroy all my sin, both outward and inward, both original and actual: that he would purify my heart, by restoring me unto perfect righteousness and true holiness, and making me a partaker of the divine nature, by lifting up the light of his coun-

countenance upon me, so that I may continually sit under the droppings of his sanctuary, and his shadow with great delight.

These are the desires the Lord has given me, and sure I am he will fulfil the desire of my soul according to his promise. *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* I have already obtained the salvation which some, who are of little minds, speak of. I am saved from guilt, from fear that giveth great torment, and from the dominion of sin. I do not commit sin in St. John's sense. I am almost continually looking unto Jesus. I almost pray without ceasing, and am thankful for the glorious manifestations of the Lord. I rejoice frequently. But will this satisfy the mighty desires of my soul? no, it cannot, it will not, it does not. I am not yet swallowed up in God. I am not yet without intermission in a flame of love. This, this is, dear Sir, the thing I aim at. Help me by your prayers. I very much long to see you at my house. It is the very great love I have unto you, and the expectation I have of being profited by you, has made me so bold.

From yours in Christ, J. A.

LETTER LXVI.

Rev. Sir, April 24, 1742. Bristol.

I Rejoice at this opportunity of writing unto you. At first, indeed, I found an unwillingness unto it, but I prayed unto the Lord that he would shew me if it was right I should. I find my soul does rejoice in God my Saviour. I feel a peace which passes all understanding, and which surmounts all doubts and fears. I have power over all sin, for

when I feel it ſtir in my heart, I directly look up unto the Lord Jeſus, and he takes it from me: yet the enemy tells me that I am under a deluſion, becauſe I do not reaſon, that therefore I reſiſt the ſpirit: and when he would convince me, I will not permit him: but I commend my cauſe to Jeſus, and he ſhews me it is my buſineſs to live unto him from hour to hour, and from moment to moment. Glory be to my Saviour, for he is nothing but love; I could praiſe him till I could ſpeak no longer. I feel burning deſires, and hungrings, and thirſtings which are ſtronger than death. I look for the Lord Jeſus coming into my heart to ſeal me his abode, and make me one ſpirit with himſelf. I have a ſure hope that he will accompliſh his work. I hear his voice, and feel his love. I cannot tell what Jeſus does for me, for it takes away my ſtrength. I think I ſhall not be long in this world. I find my outward man decays more and more. I could rejoice greatly to meet death this hour. Come Lord Jeſus! but he knows beſt. My time is in his hand, and I know he will finiſh the work of holineſs in my poor heart. Now, even now I feel my heart in great peace.

Dear Sir, pray for me, that I may have no will but that of God's, and that I may be faithful to death. O that I may to the utmoſt improve the talents God has beſtowed on ſuch an unworthy ſinner as I am. What matter of praiſe it is, that I am alive to hear the everlaſting goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt! What ſhall I render unto him for all his benefits. The name of Jeſus is more to my ſoul than all the world. Every moment he gives me freſh tokens of his love. *He creates all things new.* Every moment opens new ſcenes of ſpiritual pleaſure. What ſhall I do to love Jeſus? I long to love him with my whole heart. O Lord give me

ſtrength

ſtrength to *rejoice evermore, to pray without ceaſing, and in every thing to give thanks.*

I hope I ſhall never forget to offer my weak prayers for you. May the Lord Jeſus bleſs you, and be with you, and lead you by his holy ſpirit into all truth. May he fill your heart with his love this hour, and to all eternity. So prays, from her heart, your daughter,

and unworthy child in the goſpel of Chriſt,

S. C.

LETTER LXVII.

My dear Friend, Jan. 5, 1760.

I Greatly rejoice that the Lord hath called you out of darkneſs, into his marvellous light. O may the light ſhine clearer and clearer unto the perfect day. In order to this you have great need to watch and pray, that you may be faithful to the light you already have. The not being faithful to grace given, ſeems to be the reaſon why ſo many, after years experience in the grace of Chriſt, are ſtill babes, and perhaps weaker than at the beginning: whereas St Peter exhorts us to *grow in grace.*

Self-examination is a moſt excellent help to our growth, as it a means of bringing us acquainted with our natural depravity, for certainly as we come to know this, in a right ſenſe, we ſhall not only ſee, but feel the neceſſity of a growth in holineſs, and ſo be put upon uſing every means, and help for this end. It is undoubtedly a great bleſſing to have faith, but it is much greater to keep and increaſe it: without which we ſhall have to anſwer for the abuſe of it.

But

But the great queſtion is, how, dear Madam, you and I may grow in grace by uſing the means of grace? for nothing is more viſible than that many do this, who do not profit in holineſs: and yet nothing is more certain than that the fault lies not in the means, which are well calculated to anſwer the end. 1. We muſt take ſpecial heed that we do not make the means, the end, and ſo reſt in them as if they were the laſt thing we have to aim at. We ſhould ever keep in mind that right tempers, and right affections towards God and man, is the thing in purſuit and not the mere praying, hearing, or reading, &c. 2. We ſhould carefully avoid wanderings, ſlothfulneſs, and formality in duties: for the heart in duty, is the heart and ſoul of duty. Without this, our praying and reading, &c. are no more devout and ſpiritual performances than the motion of a clock is a vital action. But if we always look to Chriſt, and holineſs in duties, and perform them with fervour, life and earneſtneſs, we ſhall not fail to profit in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

A clean heart is entirely deſireable, and neceſſary; and in order to it, my dear, the more you conſider that all your trials are appointed or permitted of God, the more will you be helped toward it, by them. Deadneſs to this world, and eſpecially to our own will and deſire, is quite neceſſary to the life of Chriſt. Deſire always to feel the love of God ſhed abroad in your heart, and be not too eaſy without it: and deſire this, not only for the ineffable ſweetneſs it gives, but chiefly for the property of it, which is to kill ſin, and the nature of it, which is holineſs. Without this, you may love yourſelf, but you cannot love God for his amiable perfection, and infinite holineſs, which is the right way of loving him.

I ſhould

I ſhould think myſelf very happy, and be very thankful, if I am made of any uſe to my dear friend; let all the glory be given unto God, it is his due. I am not incapable of getting good from you. Do not think too highly of me, it would leſſen my profitableneſs to you. I am a worm of the earth, (though not an earth-worm) and am encompaſſed with many infirmities, which, the more you are acquainted with me, the more you will diſcover: nevertheleſs, I love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and I believe with all the capacity I have at preſent, but have need to increaſe therein day by day. Pray for me, as I do for you: who am

Your affectionate Siſter and Servant.

LETTER LXVIII.

My dear Friend, Feb. 25 1761.

I Received yours with joy, I thank God, who has raiſed you up again, as alſo on account of Mr. —— ſurely our God heareth, and anſwereth prayer. O how good it is to commend our cauſe unto him! "His ear attends the ſofteſt prayer.

Indeed, my dear, as you obſerve, it is a very difficult thing for a generous and gracious heart, to love enough, and not too much. I have not found any other way to keep clear of this extreme but by walking cloſely with God, and earneſtly commending myſelf, and them to God: praying fervently that the Lord would more abundantly bleſs them for all their kindneſs to me, and at the ſame time endeavouring all I could, to lead them nearer to God. The wounds you got from the unkindneſs of others, and that ſinking of your ſoul into

into idolatrous fondneſs, of which you complain, is occaſioned by the want of more inward ſpiritual ſtrength. My love, you want a more watchful ſpirit, that you may, in the midſt of theſe hinderances you meet with, keep your attention fixed on the bleſſed Jeſus; ſo ſhall his love flow into your heart, and be your continual ſtrength.

I hope it is not a name you aim at, as it is abundantly more than a name, even a new nature which you want. I think you will find it beſt, not to reaſon about what God has already done for you, but rather pray him to pour out his ſpirit more and more upon you, which is the only thing you want, and this will help you to believe all the promiſes of God, while the ſpirit applies them with power to your heart. I am greatly deſirous indeed of your proſperity, and ſo is your Lord: Jeſus loves you, but you do not come to him ſo freely, and conſtantly as you ought, or you would have more abundant life. But now take up your croſs, and after your dear maſter go. Be a faithful witneſs for him, among his enemies, and he will witneſs clearly to your heart that you are all his own. O may the dear Lord Jeſus bleſs you with an increaſe of his love.

My God is ſtill my guide, and his arm is my ſure defence, I have ſeen much, very much of his goodneſs, ſince I wrote laſt. And I remain,

Your inviolable Friend.

LETTER LXVIII.

My dear Friend, Nov. 16, 1760.

THE two queſtions you aſk in your laſt, are very weighty, and deſerve to be duly conſidered.

" Do

" Do you, now, believe you love God with all " your heart?" " Are you nothing ashamed " among the opposers of this glorious truth?"

If I can answer to the former, I certainly can to the latter: for I could not love God with all my heart, if I was ashamed of this, or any gospel truth; and if the latter as necessarily includes the former, I can answer heartily in the affirmative to both. I know not that I have, in the least, been ashamed of the doctrine of Christian Perfection, nor of professing my humble confidence in Christ, of my unfeigned love unto him, nor of my belief that he had and would save me from sin. And with regard to the present state of mind I am in, though I have been variously tried from every quarter, from pretended friends, and professed enemies, and from the prince of darkness, yet my heart stands fast believing in, cleaving constantly unto, and ardently loving the Lord Jesus. He is the sole monarch of my devoted soul. I desire nothing beside him: I have his loving, sweet, and powerful presence generally with me, and when he is not so sensibly and delightfully present, I am in an agony of prayer, and cease not 'till he returns; at the same time I can say from my heart, *thy will be done.* This is the language of my naked heart.

" Oh! 'tis hell from thee to part,
" Press me closer to thy heart."

Since I came here I have had great freedom, and sweetness both in preaching and prayer. It is my only design, and delight to do my Saviour's work and will. This I do at present in some small degree; but I cannot tell you how much I long to love God more abundantly than ever I did, that my obedience flowing from love, may be extensive

ſive as my powers, and delightful to my ſoul. And yet I have already, very frequently, ſuch love to Jeſus Chriſt, it is ſo ſhed abroad in my heart, that it fills my ſoul with heavenly comfort, and makes me ready to lay down my life for Chriſt, or the brethren.

I think this is a ſhort ſketch of the ſituation of my mind, as near as I know it. I ſhould be glad if you would favour me with the beſt advice and help you can give me.

I remember the happy moments we once enjoyed, with gratitude to God, and affection to you: and if ever Providence ſhall indulge us with a return of the ſame opportunities, it will be our duty to give thanks, and I heartily pray we may have wiſdom from God to make the beſt uſe of them we poſſibly can.

You know it was not my conſtitutional, or beſetting ſin by nature, furiouſly, and ſuddenly to reſent thoſe who oppoſed me; neither am I in much danger from that quarter yet: I am in vaſtly more danger from thoſe who love me, and ſo think, and ſpeak too well of me. Delicate praiſe, nicely adminiſtred, is hard to withſtand: it ſteals imperceptibly into the heart, and does miſchief, before the unwary perſon ſuſpects any harm. Yet even from this doth the Lord preſerve me, with much application unto him.

There are ſeveral perſons here, who are deeply ſenſible of the neceſſity of an entire change of the tempers and diſpoſitions of their ſouls, in order to their glorifying God on earth, in a holy converſation; and their being capable of being in his preſence for ever hereafter. They now perceive their grand miſtake lay in this, in thinking, that altho' ſuch a full renewal of ſoul, in the image, and likeneſs of Chriſt, might be neceſſary to eternal

nal glory, yet that God would effect it before he removed them from this life. Too great, or rather too falſe a dependance on this, betrayed them into preſent indifference. And it is to be feared, this is too common a caſe. The holy ſcriptures bid us fight, and wreſtle, and run; *to uſe all diligence to make our calling, and election ſure:* and when we do this, we may ſafely leave the time when, and the manner how, God will accompliſh his great work in us, to his ſovereign will. But when we relax our earneſtneſs, upon a miſtaken preſumption of our being made holy ſometime, we are in the way to foul apoſtacy, and not in the way to final ſalvation. From this, and all the devices of ſatan, good Lord preſerve thy people, and my dear friend in particular.

I am, with much affection,

your unworthy brother.

LETTER LXX.

My very dear friend, July 20, 1760.

IT is now Sunday evening; and after the labours of another ſabbath, I am weak and weary, but in a happy ſituation of mind, and a very good humour, going to write to my friend. 'Tis to be hoped I ſhall make ſome amends in this, for my ſhort comings in the laſt. It is true, I was not overcome of openneſs, and expreſſions of freedom, yet the Lord knoweth, I had not, neither have I any thing at preſent, in my heart toward you, but love, and good will. I believe I have very few ſuch friends. I heartily deſire our friendſhip may be continued, and our uſefulneſs

to each other encreaſed much more than ever. I think it is founded on a ſure baſis, the love of God. And I doubt not but it will continue through this life, and be renewed in diſtant worlds, to continue to all eternity.

My meaning, with regard to particular friendſhip, was this: we may deſire the favour, and help of one, or more chriſtian friends, and for the ſake of the ſpiritual profit we expect from them, we may do, and forego many things to continue in their eſteem, without betraying pride, a want of humility, or ſeeking the honor which cometh of men: but we cannot indulge a deſire of eſteem and favour from people in general; eſpecially when our deſire is warm and importunate, and favour and eſteem the end of our purſuit, without diſcovering an unmortified affection to the things of this world. There is no good, or ill in men thinking highly, or meanly of me, farther than I am enabled to do leſs or more good unto them, or receive leſs or more good from them. If they think me the beſt ſaint on earth, it does not make me at all better, it may make me abundantly worſe, if I learn to think more highly of myſelf, than I ought to think thereby: on the other hand, if they think me an ungodly hypocrite, or an incarnate devil, it does not make me either more unholy, or unhappy, if I am not angry thereat. Let us always conſider ourſelves, neither more or leſs, than we are before God, and it will cure us of this diſeaſe.

Your meaſure of doing good, may not always be adjuſted by your deſire of it, but by your power to do it. Your deſire may exceed your circumſtances, and if followed, would involve you in evils

evils which would over-balance the good. However, there are very few who err on this hand; and where they do, a little discretion will put them into the way again.

I have, this morning, just been preaching from Heb. 13, xiii, xiv. *Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.* How indispensibly necessary, thought I, is it, that I should be fully determined to take this advice myself, who am going to enforce it upon others. I lifted up my heart to him, from whom I receive every good gift I need, and he gave me power to resolve upon this great enterprize. I went forth, and exhorted my brethren to the same, and, (if I knew my heart) was as willing to go before them, as to have them follow me. So I now look upon myself, as inlisted under the banner, and among the sufferers of Christ. I cannot desert this post, or fly from any danger I am lawfully called unto, without shameful dishonour to my profession, and great prejudice to my soul. But I hope to stand in the might of my glorious Captain.

My soul was very much affected with joyful expectation, when I came to consider, "We have no continuing city here, but we seek one to come." It put new life into all my powers, and courage into my heart. Said I, am I in quest of a city which has foundations, whose Builder, and Maker is God; which has no need of a temple, the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, being the temple of it; nor of the sun, and moon, the glory of God, and of the Lamb being the light thereof; how can my heart languish? how very transient is the season of reproach, and then I shall be advanced to durable honour; how very short the time of suffering, and then I shall be raised to everlasting

happineſs. Oh! my dear friend, what a bleſſing it is, that we are only ſojourners here: I would not have otherwiſe for a thouſand worlds.

I cannot neglect to give you ſome little account of the undeſerved favours, I receive from God daily. My cup of conſolation frequently runs over, and my ſprings of comfort never ceaſe altogether.

" So many wonderous gleams of light,
" And gentle ardors from above,
" Have made me ſit like ſeraph bright,
" Some moments on a throne of love:
" Oh! what is virtue, why had I,
" Who am ſo low, a taſte ſo high?"

I ſay, and ſay it from my heart, before my Maker, who knoweth me better than I know myſelf, unto all-created good, thou art not my God: thy preſence, with the abſence of my beloved, would be a ſtate too intollerable to ſuſtain: the enjoyment of thee, without the fruition of the bleſſed Jeſus, would be a deſtitution not to be borne. When I ſee my dear Redeemer, and the beauty of his grace and holineſs, and the glories of his kingdom, all that the world calls great or good, appears as nothing in my eyes: when his love is ſhed abroad in my heart, as it uſually is, in ſome conſiderable degree, I can wink all-created beauty into deformity, and all ſenſitive enjoyments loſe their reliſh.

" Lord! I love thee, thou knoweſt, who knows all things; elſe why do all the faculties of my ſoul thus clamour after thee, and cleave unto thee? if I do not love thee, why would I die rather than offend thee? Why do I fear hell leſs than thy frown, and deſire heaven leſs than thy ſmile? why do I continually long more for thee, than for my daily food?

food? and why is all company a burden unto me, which in the leaſt keep me from converſing with, and delighting myſelf in thee? my Lord tell me, if theſe are not ſigns that I love thee."

Thus I often plead with, and appeal unto my dear Redeemer; and I cannot expreſs how much I deſire to be nearer unto him, and more like him. Come, thou happy moment, which ſhall take away this painful diſtance between me and my Beloved. My eyes ſee it at a diſtance; it comes upon the wings of time, it will ſhortly arrive: let patience, O my ſoul, have her perfect work, and the deſire will come, which will be a tree of life. Help me, help me, my good friend, by your prayers; and may the God of all grace, make his gracious face to ſhine upon you, enrich you with all heavenly treaſure, and fill you with all the life of God; that like a ſtately veſſel, riding before a proſperous gale, you may return from the hazardous, but well-conducted voyage, into the haven of everlaſting reſt. So unfeignedly prays.

Your affectionate Brother,
and inviolable Friend.

LETTER LXXI.

My very dear Friend, Aug. 9, 1760.

I HAVE but very little time to write in, it being already near the poſt-hour. Paſſing over the formal ceremonies of receiving yours, &c. let me tell you, I am much concerned for your want of health, and ſhould be abundantly more, if it was not, that I ſtedfaſtly believe, that all things ſhall work together for your good.

I thank God my health has lately been a little better than usual. My soul is solidly happy. I hunger and thirst after righteousness, and I believe the Lord will fulfil my largest desires. I wish I was more abundantly humble, and watchful. If I had a thousand times as much strength, and ten thousand tongues, and all eternity before me, I should think all vastly too little to praise my Redeemer with. Help me to praise him; and pray unto him that I may be more faithful, and fruitful, unto death.

M. D. died on Thursday was fortnight, very happy, in full assurance of faith, with a clean heart, and clear prospect of eternal glory. I preached her funeral sermon on the Sunday following, to a large congregation, from Gen. 49. xviii. *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.* And last Sunday I performed the like service for Mrs. H. There were a larger company than before. After sermon, we bore her relicks to the church yard, attended with several thousand hearers, and an incredible multitude of affected spectators, while we sung the praises of the Lord, and the happiness of those who die in him. So solemn a sight I never saw before! Lord, when shall I be the occasion, and subject of such a solemnity? the portion of scripture she made choice of for this occasion, was the language of her mind, and the picture of her state, in the latter part of her life, and at her death. Psalm 119. lxxv, lxxvi. *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.*

Time flies, and the post cannot stay: eternity is just at hand, and the world going to conclude its slabbard tale. The Lord give us a safe, and speedy

ſpeedy flight, " where change ſhall be no more." Adieu. Adieu.

LETTER LXXII.

My dear Friend, May 23, 1761.

I Sincerely rejoice on Mr. D——'s account, and I hope by this time I may alſo congratulate you on account of your having entered into that happy land of uprightneſs, which is always favoured with God's peculiar ſmile; where he keeps his own in perfect peace, and everlaſting reſt. May you ſweetly abide in Jeſu's love, and be filled with his abundant fullneſs.

You bid me tell you what I think of you. I will ſpeak freely: I believe you are not far from that love which caſteth out all ſlaviſh fear. The Lord hath arreſted you, and made you a priſoner of hope: you are, for a time detained in the wilderneſs, but your Lord will, with his own arm deliver you. Be ſtrong, be bold, fear not, Jeſus the Captain of your ſalvation goes before you. He will ſend forth judgment unto victory; and deſtroy all your enemies. When he hath made you all fair, then will he behold no ſpot in you. You ſhall as perfectly bear the image of the heavenly Adam, as you have born that of the earthly one. Your Saviour has, does, and will bleſs you for evermore. Yea he will keep you night and day, and water you every moment.

But remember this, as your Lord was a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief, therefore muſt you, as long as you abide in this earthly tabernacle, drink of the ſame cup your Saviour drank of,

and

and, less or more, *be baptized with the baptism, which he was baptized with. Every one that is perfect, shall be as his Master.* You are called to be conformed to a suffering, as well as a glorified Saviour: and must have fellowship with him in his suffering, that you may partake of his glory. Through much tribulation all the saints enter into the kingdom of God; and especially those who enter deepest into the spirit of it on earth, and highest into the glories of it in heaven. Yet blessed are they who follow Christ in the painfully pleasant path of regeneration, and abide with him in all his temptations. Their crown shall be as much distinguished for its brightness in heaven, as their sufferings were distinguished for their blackness on earth. The way of the cross, is the sure way to eternal glory.

Do not think that a bare freedom from evil tempers, is the highest christian perfection you can possibly arrive at; but aim at perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Neither expect, when you shall come into this state, to appear in your own eyes, a fine, wise, and glorious creature, no: expect to be like a little child, that has to learn to walk, and almost every thing to ask of its parents. Expect to be astonished, as well at your ignorance, simplicity, littleness, and meanness, as at the infinite blessing bestowed upon you, and the inconceivable change wrought in you. An unutterable depth of humility, teachableness, and mildness, is the supreme height of that perfection, which none can conceive but those who arrive at it.

You cannot follow your master, and fight under your captain, unless you are clothed with all the armour of God. And then you will find many, and hard battles to fight; but victory, sure victory will ensue. Do you now walk in white with Christ?

If

If you do, praiſe your loving Lord, and look to Jeſus every moment. Go forward, and may the Lord teach you by his bleſſed ſpirit, and refreſh you by his love. If not, now dare to believe, lay hold on the hope ſet before you; the glorious hope of perfect love. Jeſus will give you all you ſtand in need of. The Lord will bury you in his grave, that you with him may riſe. Then, when he who is your life may appear, you alſo may appear with him, and be for ever with the Lord. Even now behold the fair beauty of the Redeemer, lie at the feet of the ever living, ever loving Jeſus: let your ſoul reſt in his mighty hand, that he may form and mould it into his own image. He waiteth and wanteth to be gracious, cleave unto him, and loſe yourſelf in him.

The Lord does work, and who ſhall hinder him? A week ſince, a few friends came to ſee me, we joined together in prayer, particularly for Nancy's deliverance; the Lord poured upon us the ſpirit of grace, and of ſupplication, in which we continued an hour and an half: the Lord, the great deliverer, heard and anſwered us. He gave her the deſire of her heart. Theſe were ſome of her expreſſions. "Lord, I do believe! My ſoul hangs on thee! thou wilt ſeal me to the day of redemption! O bleſſed Jeſus, thou wilt keep my ſoul for ever! glory be to thee!" In ſuch phraſes as theſe ſhe abounded for a conſiderable time: ſhe ſince remains happy. Our God is indeed, a God that heareth prayer. Whatever we aſk according to his will, he will do it for his own name's ſake.

I bleſs the Lord, I feel my ſoul lying ſafe in his mighty hand, and I am kept in perfect peace. While I am in a multitude, my ſoul is retired with Jeſus from the noiſe and ſhew thereof. Yet how little is that I have received, in comparriſon of

that

that I see before me, and at which I aim. Grace is of a growing and encreasing nature, and wherever the encumbrances of self indulgence, pride, evil-desire, unbelief, &c. are cleared away, it will not fail to ripen into perfection. Many, it may be, have received a larger stock than I have, but it is my duty, and I believe, ever will be my care and pleasure, to be thankful for what I have, and to pray for what I want. I want to have my life more sensibly hid with Christ in God; and to believe, love, and obey in a fuller manner, and larger measure, than I do at present. Yet a little, a very little while, and eternity will be here, and land us safe in the wished for port. We shall meet in the realms of endless day. We shall then see the glorious face of our beloved Jesus, without a vail. The painful distance shall subsist no more. We shall, even we shall behold him on his great white throne, and delightfully cast our crowns at his feet, and hail the Lamb who died to redeem us unto God, in endless songs, which angels cannot learn. I am his by twice ten thousand ties, which bind me to his heart. He is my God, and my all. Is he not your God? surely he is. Do not you love him with all your heart? "He is altogether lovely. Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Can you hold out any longer? will you yet refuse to give him your heart, who has bought it with blood divine? O! now let redeeming love make an entire conquest of your yielding heart.

I am, your affectionate Sister,
in the dear Lord Jesus.

LET-

LETTER LXXIII.

My dear, dear friend, Sept. 2, 1760.

I Received yours, and am heartily glad, and unfeignedly thankful to hear you ſpeak in ſo heavenly a ſtrain. I think a joyful ſpirit lives, and breathes in every line. Thanks be to my God, who is all-ſufficient to fill the largeſt deſires of our immortal ſouls. Are our deſires of holineſs, boundleſs? ſo are the promiſes of God; and boundleſs alſo is the promiſer. Who can find out the Almighty to perfection? his being is an ocean of infinities, where all our thoughts are drowned; a fountain of living waters, where our thirſt is quenched, and our ſouls refreſhed; an inexhauſtible ſtore, where all our wants are ſupplied; and a bleſſed centre, where all our wiſhes, deſires, and affections meet.

O! how I long to riſe higher into his divine image, and ſink lower into the humble mind of Chriſt. Lord, when ſhall I appear before thee? what ſhall I do to ſet forth thy praiſe? If I had ten thouſand tongues, I would praiſe thee with them all: if I had ten thouſand hearts, I would love thee with them all: if I had ten thouſand bodies, I would gladly ſacrifice them all to thy ſervice. O bleſſed Jeſus, what can poſſibly be too dear for thee, who has not ſpared thy precious blood, but has ſhed it freely for ſo unworthy a creature! my demerit exalts thy boundleſs grace.

Thy love ſent thee into my nature, and the world wherein I dwell; and ſhall it not draw my heart into thy image and glory? Be gone, ye earthly trifles, and every creature enjoyment, which

which would detain me from my Lord's embrace: you shall not flatter my affections; you could not recompence my loss. O Lord, thy name is as ointment poured forth, more exquisitely delightful than the richest perfumes of the apothecaries, or the powders of the merchants, yea, than the most finished pleasures of sense. How sweet it is to love Jesus! Oh! that I had a more simple, humble, loving, and teachable heart. I long to be all like Christ, for the love I have unto him.

But I forgot myself, that I am writing to one who knows Jesus, and his charms better than I do. My dear friend, teach me how to know and love him better. I have had some happy interviews with S. R. which put me in mind of the Yorkshire times: Lord, when it is good for us, thou wilt restore and repeat them; till then the absence of them will be for the best. Farewell for ever, in the Lord Jesus.

LETTER LXXIV.

My dear Brother,

IT administers matter of joy, and thankfulness to me, and all who look upon themselves as strangers and pilgrims, here below; to hear that one, and another, is landed safe upon that happy shore, where the wicked cease from troubling; and the weary are at rest! what is there worth living for? to die to behold his blessed face without a veil, is a blessing indeed!

There we shall see his face and never never sin. There from the rivers of his grace, drink endless pleasures in. I pray God this dispensation may have

have a ſanctified effect upon you. May the great teacher of Iſrael teach you; and may I be a ſimple learner at your feet.

I find it is with ſome difficulty I write to you on any ſubject ſave that of deſiring your help and advice for my own ſoul. I abhor myſelf in duſt and aſhes. I am weak as helpleſs infancy. I find the deſire of my ſoul is to gain by every loſs, to keep my eye on the mark. I would chuſe the moſt excellent way. I deſire ever to ſee God in all, and all in God. I would be ſo fully certified of the wiſdom and goodneſs of God in every diſpenſation, as to ſay from the ground of my heart, "Thy will be done." Let us be thankful for the meaſure of theſe graces we find in ourſelves, and preſs forwards till we experience all that the Lord has promiſed to give.

Let me give you a hint with reſpect to your children. You know the Lord hath entruſted you with their ſouls as well as their bodies: it ſhould be matter of great moment with you to take heed into whoſe family they are caſt.

The Lord be with you on your journey: if Providence ſhould caſt your lot in our circuit I believe many hearts would rejoice. Remember me affectionately to all friends.

From your affectionate Siſter in Chriſt,

R. H.

LETTER LXXV.

Much eſteemed Friend,

I Am unwilling to neglect this opportunity of letting thee hear from me, although I have little to ſay concerning myſelf.

I see the beauty of holiness, and I long to attain to it, but alas, I am slow of heart, I feel my unbelief keeps me from the glorious liberty of the children of God. Yet I have a full assurance, the work of salvation is carrying on in my soul; and at the most barren times, I cannot doubt, but I shall witness full redemption, in the blood of Jesus! I am much tempted to put the day afar off, and give up my confidence, and to say how is it possible for me to attain so great salvation? but as I wait upon the Lord, I find my strength renewed in him; and I am fully convinced his grace is sufficient for me. O! that my eye was continually looking up to Jesus; for when I keep close to him, he confirms me in my belief, that it is his will I should be perfect. Indeed my friend I meet with many interruptions in my way, but I long for that day to come, which shall burn as an oven; that neither root, nor branch, of unrighteousness may remain in me. Fain would I give up my whole soul, and body to the service of my God, that I may dwell in his house for ever. O! pray for me that I faint not, but that in due time, I may reap that salvation, which at present I stedfastly believe my Saviour has purchased for me.

Great peace do I enjoy, and at particular times my Lord communicates much of his love to me: he seems to deal with me as a parent with a sickly child: he discovers to me what is hurtful and suffers me not to feel his anger: but I yet feel the depth of ingratitude in me; for surely if I loved him as I ought, my heart would be filled with thanksgiving, and my lips would continually speak of his praise.

I remember in my first letter to thee, I observed if thou couldest shew me a religion more holy, or more lovely than our own principles lead to, I would readily embrace it. So far I must confess; it has

pleased

pleaſed God through thy miniſtry, to give me a more perfect view of the glorious law of liberty, than I had ever conceived before; yet he has not in the leaſt convinced me, that any outward ordinance I have not yet complied with, could be acceptable to him, but ſhews me my whole heart is what he requires of me; and if I may ſo ſay, I am more eſtabliſhed in primitive Quakeriſm, than I ever was in my life before. My heart is enlarged. My faith is encreaſed. Often after hearing you, my ſoul has been filled as with new wine But I could not remain long here. My own unprofitable thoughts have returned upon me; and indeed at preſent, theſe ſeems to be the greateſt enemies I have to encounter with. O! when ſhall I be able to ſay? I no longer live, but Chriſt liveth in me.

I can truly ſay; all the enjoyments, and friendſhips of this world appear as vanity in compariſon of the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus. Yet I fear I ſtill love my own eaſe too well; and I know the fear of man is not overcome in me; but I truſt my God will cleanſe the temple of my heart from all idols, and take up his abode in me. For this great ſalvation my ſoul hungers and thirſts.

You have provoked me to good works; and if I was never to hear from you more, if I am faithful to the gift received, I know I ſhall be a more living member in the church; for I can now declare to others, what God has done for my ſoul.

I cannot help deſiring to ſee thee, or thy brother, and I hope Providence will permit me to hear one of you a few times before I go into H——ſhire, and if thou haſt leiſure, I ſhould take it as a favour to have a few lines from thee, whilſt I remain in this barren place, friend C—— will convey them to me.

May the great God of truth, bleſs thee in all thy undertakings. May'ſt thou dwell in the ſecret place of the moſt high; and abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty; is the ſincere deſire of thy real, though

Unworthy Friend,

S. P.

LETTER LXXVI.

INDEED, my good friend, I want much to hear of thy recovery, and was in hopes I ſhould have had a line from thee. My deſires for thy welfare are ſtrong, although I have not wrote to thee. The work in me goes on but ſlowly; yet my Lord doth not with-hold his comforts; but I dare not judge of my ſtate, from what I feel of his comforts only, but from what I overcome alſo.

Peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is continued to me, and I much long to be filled with the fulneſs of his love. At times, ſince I have been in this place, my ſoul hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, and I have had a witneſs in myſelf, that I am where his Providence has placed me; yet I muſt confeſs, I have not ſo frequently feaſted in his preſence, as when I had the privilege of hearing you; but I believe he never will forſake me: he is a friend which ſticketh cloſer than a brother; and I am often made to think, If I was in a dungeon, or deſart, I ſhould be happy in the enjoyment of him. If he was to take his ſpirit from me, and all temporal joys were mine, I know I ſhould be wretched without him whom my ſoul loveth.

I fully

I fully, and conſtantly find, nothing without holineſs can make me happy; and nothing with it, can make me miſerable! I feel no unholy deſire in me, but I often beg, that my heart may be ſearched as with a candle, that I may not deceive myſelf, or others.

When I am writing to others, I moſtly feel ſuch divine comfort, and heavenly joy break in upon my ſoul, that I cannot forbear confeſſing how good my Lord is to me; but when this fervency of ſpirit is abated, I am ready to reflect upon myſelf, and ſay, perhaps I ſhall make my friends think I have attained to more than I really have. I would fain be without guile. I often wiſh I could diſcover my heart as it is; Lord, ſhew me the depth of evil, that is in me, is my ſincere cry. The things of this world, give me no delight. At times, I ſeem as one who has nothing to do with them; and I long to get home, that I may enjoy my Beloved without intermiſſion; for it ſeems to me, as if the end of my days would be a time of great rejoicing. And yet, when I conſider how many have taſted of the good word of life, and longed as I do to dwell with Jeſus, and have nevertheleſs forſook him, it fills me with ſtrong deſires, that he would ſpeedily finiſh his work, and take me to himſelf. But I know this is wrong; I ought to have no deſire, but that his will may be fulfilled in me. Surely it is his will, that I ſhould be without carefulneſs; therefore, I truſt he will preſerve me from the cares of this world, and in his own time prepare my ſoul for his abode. It ſeems to me, as if he was emptying me, in order to fill me with the riches of his love; but alas! ſelf is ſtill alive: I feel, and abhor it; for I know I cannot enter into Canaan until this grand enemy is ſlain. When I think on what I once was, a great change ſeems

to be wrought in me; but when I compare what I am, with what I ought to be, I find the work is but begun! I am filled with admiration, at the goodneſs of God to me: of all his ſervants, I ſeem to do the leaſt for his glory; and yet his banner over me is love! O! that I may be faithful. If works were to juſtify us, where muſt I appear? Lord! thou knoweſt none can love thee, but thoſe who deſire to ſerve thee; and thou acceptest of the little mite which is offered up in pure love to thee; and if I abide in thee, thou wilt purge me, that I may bring forth fruit to thy praiſe.

I often think, if it was poſſible for an unregenerate ſoul to feel the happineſs our Maſter beſtows on his followers, ſurely they would forſake all, and follow him; and no longer ſeek happineſs in the pleaſures, or profits of this world, but confeſs, no bliſs comparable to the love of Jeſus!

I have been conſtrained (ſince I have been in this place) to vindicate your doctrines: I ſincerely wiſh, that all who hear you, would do you the juſtice not to condemn what they do not underſtand.

In the love and fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt, my ſoul tenderly ſalutes thee.

I remain thy unworthy Friend.

S. P.

LETTER LXXVII.

Eſteemed Friend,

REmaining under a living ſenſe of the good received by thy miniſtry, obliges me to think it my duty to let thee hear from me.

I ſtill

I ſtill keep the promiſed land in ſight, but move ſlowly towards it. I would gladly be found entire—lacking nothing. I find a longing deſire in my heart, to be made a partaker of the divine nature. The enemy of my ſoul does not make war againſt me, by ſtirring up any of my paſſions, but by ſtriving to lull me aſleep, that he may rob me of mine inheritance, by cauſing me to reſt ſhort of the promiſe; but I firmly believe, that nothing will prevail with me, to leave off wreſtling, till I receive the bleſſing.

I long to know the will of my heavenly Father more perfectly, that all my time may be ſpent to his glory: The profits and pleaſures of this world, appear in my eyes, altogether lighter than vanity. I think I may ſafely ſay, my treaſure is in heaven. My affections are not ſet on things below. I am ſure, the ſtrongeſt deſire of my ſoul, is, that Jeſus would make his abode with me, and fulfil his will in me. I feel no other deſire at preſent, as to my temporal affairs, but that Providence may order them moſt for my ſpiritual advantage. One thing have I deſired of the Lord; that will I ſeek after: that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord, all the days of my life; to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. I have found a great change in the fruit of my imagination, ſince I firſt heard you; which encourages me to hope, I ſhall witneſs the thoughts of my heart to be good continually: when this bleſſed change comes, I ſhall be at reſt; for "Lord, thou knoweſt my deſire is to awake with thy likeneſs, haſten the time, I beſeech thee; for nothing can ſatisfy me, but thy having full dominion over me! O! quicken me with thy ſpirit, that I may call upon thee." I know it muſt be my corruptions, which hinder me from conſtantly enjoying my God. O! may I receive faith,

to

to overcome all things. Our Saviour bids us *be of good chear*; *he has overcome the world*; and I believe, all that follow him, shall obtain the victory. I know my Lord often breaks bread to my hungry soul, and hands forth to me the wine of the kingdom. He himself creates in my heart, a grateful remembrance of his love to me, by pouring into my soul thanksgiving and praise.

O! how sweet, how glorious it is, when we open the door of our hearts, and the Lord of life comes and sups with us? 'Tis impossible for me to tell thee, how unworthy I see myself of every blessing I enjoy; yet feel such assurances of love, such divine consolation, as causes my eyes often to overflow with tears of joy! how full of blessings does my past life appear to me now! every bitter cup I have drunk, I plainly see was a healthy potion to my soul! I felt the drawings of my Father's love from my very infancy! his holy spirit was striving with me; and when I rebelled, he brought me back, and baptized me in the water of affliction, and then sealed his pardoning love to me. In my latter days, he has brought me acquainted with his choicest servants; increased my faith by them; and given me a promise, of dwelling in the land which floweth with milk and honey.

Yet am I still ungrateful, to this best of benefactors! I know, I do not love him as I ought; nor serve him as I desire. I find great reluctance in reproving sin; yet it grieves me when I behold it. I would fain persuade others (by being holy in all manner of conversation) to seek after the good which I enjoy. O! may I thus attain to be a preacher of righteousness. I have often wished my heart were laid open for all the world to behold it; for I am sure, they would see my affections are not set upon it, nor any thing in it.

I know

I know every deed, and every thought muſt be brought to light; and therefore I admire at people's being ſo very much againſt confeſſing their faults, one to another. I believe thoſe who keep ſtrictly to truth, in telling their experiences, do much good to others, whether they are ſeeking the Lord, or otherwiſe; and I can therefore ſay, I have felt great comfort, in telling others how the Lord deals with me.

I believe many of your hearers would find it more profitable for their own ſouls, were they to wait upon the Lord before the ſervice begins; and to feel after him all the time, if haply they may find him. O! may the Lord preſerve us from running into any extreme, and give us a right judgment in all things.

I have ſeveral times been with ſome of the church of England, who meet together to diſcourſe about the things of God. I ſhould be glad to know what books thou wouldeſt adviſe ſeeking ſouls to read; for it ſeems to me, that they know not how to make a right choice for themſelves. I have found comfort in converſing with them. I hope a true goſpel miniſter will ſoon be ſent unto them.

I meet with ſome who are ſeeking after holineſs. One young man, of our people, was convinced of his need of it, by thee; and I hope we ſhall encourage one another to go on.

I believe thou haſt reaſon for not letting me hear from thee; but I do not think it is to prevent my writing to thee, and therefore take this freedom. I can truly ſay, I hold no man's perſon in admiration; but I know 'tis the will of my Father, that I ſhould highly eſteem thoſe in love, whom he has made inſtruments of good to me; for which reaſon, it would be a refreſhing to me to hear of thy welfare,

fare. I am ſure it is my fervent deſire, that the people over whom the Lord has made you overſeer, may become a church without wrinkle or ſpot, that the deſire of thy ſoul may be ſatisfied. In the fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt,

I remain thy unworthy Friend.

S. P.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Dear Friend,

THY Letter I received, and have long thought to anſwer it. At times, my ſoul has been full of love; but I have not had opportunity to write to thee at thoſe ſeaſons; yet I cannot refrain telling thee, I ſtill retain a lively gratitude, a ſincere thankfulneſs to the Almighty, for bringing me acquainted with you; and I earneſtly deſire, that I may not be a forgetful hearer. I hope it has not only been a bleſſing to my own ſoul, but has diffuſed itſelf to others alſo. I find a conſtant deſire to improve, not bury, the one talent committed to me; not that I may receive any praiſe; no, verily. I know I gain the contempt of the world, by ſpending my time with poor ſinners; for I already hear, that I ſay, and do things that I never thought of: yet, I earneſtly deſire I may be employed by the Lord's people, if but as a hewer of ſtone, or a drawer of water; for I plainly perceive no member in his church is to ſtand idle; no veſſel in his houſe is to be uſeleſs. I deſire no extraordinary gifts to glorify my Father: all my wiſh is, that he would glorify himſelf by me, in the way and manner he thinks beſt. There is no bleſſing, I ſo conſtantly, and fervently

fervently desire, as lowliness of heart. Pride is the strongest hold, the enemy of my soul has in me: I abhor it most of all sin, yet I oftener feel it stir in me than any other evil whatever; but I know if I continue looking unto Jesus, I shall be more than conqueror.

Several of our friends have agreed to meet together, on purpose to declare our experiences freely to each other. Last third day, I felt a great reluctance to go, hearing a Papist and several strangers were to be there, on my account. My heart was very heavy, because I thought I should have nothing to say to them. I besought the Lord, and he comforted me; and blessed be his holy name, he gave me power to declare fully and simply, his dealings with me; and I have cause to believe his blessing attended it. I went home rejoicing.

The next evening I went to a society of churchmen, which is kept at a Shoemaker's house. They read and prayed, and then concluded with singing. When they had done, I read a letter of S——D——'s to them, and gave them a sermon on Perfection. Some of them are very loving to me, but other's are biggotted against the Quakers, and (I believe) think I have some design upon them. But I can truly say, I have no party to set up; I have no desire to promote any thing amongst them, besides holiness. Poor creatures, they are ignorant as yet; but the Lord does not despise the day of small things.

At times, I have full assurance given me, that I shall be made whole: the day of my redemption seems to draw near. At other times, the happy day seems to be far off.

I grow stronger, for I feel my own weakness every day! All sin appears exceeding sinful to me: I often think what manner of person I ought to be

in

in all holy converſation. O! that all your hearers may be heartily concerned to bring forth fruit to the glory of God; for I am ſure, unleſs we do, our condemnation will be greater than theirs who deſpiſe us!

I find an entire freedom, when I am writing to thy brother, or thee. An unſpeakable bleſſing it is to me, that my God has removed all party religion far from me. I cannot cry up what God has done, in oppoſition to what he is doing: ſo long as we truly love our head, Chriſt Jeſus, I am ſure we ſhall love his members, ſuppoſe our judgment be not convinced of the truth of every opinion they hold.

I think I may ſay, if ever I heard the goſpel preached in my life, I did it lately by a poor man, who came to viſit us. He earneſtly preſſed us all to die to ſin, and live unto righteouſneſs. O! that the Lord would raiſe up more ſuch plain, honeſt teachers, of a noble Catholic ſpirit! then ſhould we proſper.

I have this day taſted how good the Lord is; he has refreſhed me with his preſence, but O! my friend it is impoſſible for me to tell thee how much I long fully to enjoy him. If thy buſineſs will admit, I ſhould be glad to hear from thee. In the love of our dear Lord Jeſus I remain,

Thy Friend,

S. P.

LETTER LXXIX.

I Return my dear friend many thanks for ſo ſoon anſwering my letter. I hope I can bleſs God for his

his great goodneſs to you; and it ſhall be my prayer to my heavenly Father, that he would give you all that may conduce to make you happy in life, eaſy and joyful at the approach of death, and meet to partake of thoſe pleaſures that are at his right hand for ever. Let us yield ourſelves unto God! I hope the Lord will give you grace to ſtand firm to the truth, unto the end. Indeed I have ever found it good to be on the Lord's ſide: and though as poor, faint-hearted, blundering a creature as ever was kept in the way; yet I bleſs the name of the Lord, who has not ſuffered me wilfully and wickedly to depart from him.

I ſee many running the heavenly race, and I would gladly run with them; but alas! I find myſelf too weak to keep pace with them: yet bleſſed be God, I am reſolved by his grace, that though I cannot run with them, I will creep after them; and I hope ſhortly to ſit at their feet in the New Jeruſalem. But I cannot be content to have my friend take my pace: I would have him a runner: may the Lord grant he may be clad with zeal as with a cloak. I believe you ſee many things at preſent that might amuſe a carnal mind, there are many ſmooth ways to hell: how difficult it is to avoid them all! what care and prayer does it require!

" The path of virtue far more rugged is,
" But Oh! it leads to everlaſting bliſs!

My beſt love to all friends,

I am, &c.

E. G.

LETTER LXXX.

Dear ***,

GOD is love: Chriſt's yoke is eaſy. If the Lord is our ſhepherd we ſhall want nothing. Shall we ever meet in heaven? I hope we ſhall. Yet a few moments more, and *he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry.* We ſhall ſhortly behold him without a veil. That awful day will ſurely come. It will little avail us then what opinion we are of; but what we really are. Lord ſearch, and try me, that I may not be confounded at that day.

I have changed my place of abode, and find many new trials; but, indeed, the Lord is good to me, and his grace will be ſufficient for me. We have nothing to fear but ſin, if we have given ourſelves to the Lord. I fear the love of many waxes cold; but let us be humble and watchful. Devote yourſelf to the Lord, and then you cannot expect too much from him: he will far outdo your higheſt expectations. God is a tried Friend; but let us prepare for temptations. When ſhall we leave all for Chriſt? When ſhall we glory in nothing but his croſs? When we are as wiſe as we ought to be, we ſhall. O Lord, teach us this bleſſed leſſon. I think I do love Jeſus Chriſt; and how am I beholden to him for this? But O my dear Lord and God, my King and Saviour, help me to love thee better. My wiſh for you is that you may truly know, and then I am ſure you will love him. You will find him a ſympathizing Friend in all your afflictions; a ſtrong Deliverer in

all

all your trials; and a wife Adviſer in every doubtful circumſtance. The Lord bleſs you.

I am, &c.

E. G.

LETTER LXXXI.

My dear Friend,

I Have often thought of my dear friends at L— ſince I left you.

I have now no one to ſpeak my mind freely and fully unto, but Jeſus Chriſt: in his attentive and compaſſionate ear, I pour out my frequent prayer; and he hears and helps me ſpeedily: ſo that having now no human helps or comforters, I need none;

"Chriſt is all the world to me,
"And all my heart is love."

I had a little illneſs the other week, but it was acceptable to me, and good for me. Nothing is amiſs my Saviour doth. I need not be careful about any thing. For I know all things do, and will work together for my good, ſo long as I love him, which I intend to do for ever. Oh! the ſweetneſs of that reſt, which is obtained by leaving all deſire, but that of pleaſing and enjoying Jeſus. One day here is better than a thouſand. What are all the riches, pleaſures, and honours of this world, when compared with the treaſures of Chriſt's grace, the ſweetneſs of his love he puts upon the ſaints? They bare not ſo great a proportion to them, as the ſmalleſt grain of ſand, to the greateſt mountain, or a ſecond of time to ten thou-

ſand ages. If we always ſee them in this light, and feel them make correſpondent impreſſions upon our minds, how eaſy will it be to prefer them to the other! How unable will the things of time be to warp our judgments, or draw our affections to their intereſt! With what patience ſhall we bear afflictions, loſſes, and diſappointments: and with what eaſe ſhall we deny ourſelves of any thing that would rob us of our Saviour's love! How light would ſlander and diſgrace ſit upon us, while conſcious we are approved, and honoured of God! What a ſmall thing to be poor in this world, when we have wealth enough at home, in heaven! and how can we poſſibly want pleaſure, while we rejoice in hope of the glory of God!

Let not your heart ſay, "But this is not the caſe with me." When you examine your ſtate, put mercy and loving kindneſs enough in the oppoſite ſcale to your demerit, and unworthineſs. When you reaſon; let not unbelief but faith draw the concluſion, and when you are tempted, think not of your own weakneſs, but of Chriſt's ſtrength. God be with your ſpirit.

Farewell.

LETTER LXXXII.

MY good Friend will not be ſurprized if I tell him, I have been ſome time heſitating whether I ſhould write or not. By the light I have I ſee ſo much darkneſs, and ſo much vileneſs, that I fear almoſt to write a ſingle ſentence, leſt I ſhould be guilty of that mockery, which is an abomination to the God of ſincerity.

You

You have sometimes gently reproved me for complaining; but is there not a cause? I can, I must complain; but not of my Lord: He is still gracious, or my ingratitude had sunk me beyond the reach of mercy, long e'er now. These lines are a proof that he is *gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and of abundant kindness.* This shews you that I am out of hell. Nay more, you must glorify the Lord with me, for he tells me "I am thy salvation." O my brother, what a good Saviour is this that saveth me! what a great Physician is he who healeth me. It is true (and I must proclaim it aloud upon the house tops) that Jesus Christ does save even me.

Since I left L—— my soul has been in prison, "Deep called unto deep, at the noise of his water "spouts; all his billows ran over me." I have been indeed like Jonah in the whale's belly; yet out of the belly of hell I cried, and he heard me. I sunk down insensibly, till I became as if I had had no God: temptation poured in like a flood: and for several days, I thought I could gladly have contented myself to have been a dog rather than a man. But in a little time he returned, and with loving kindness he gathered me. Did I not think you acquainted with these things, I should wave telling, what must appear enthusiasm to a natural man. In the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, he let me see that Christ's body was broken for me; that Christ's blood was shed for me: he healed my backslidings, and loved me freely. For three whole days I found his peace and love so eminently in my heart, that I began to think he had perfected me in holiness. O how good it is "to go by the foot-"steps of the flocks, and feed one's kids besides the "shepherd's tents!" but now I know he hath not yet brought me forth, I have not yet attained; I

feel my heart yet impure: but pray for me, while I tell you with reverence, even I begin to feel my conſcience "quick as the apple of an eye." I do not feel that humility I want in telling this,—I fear to proceed—but pray for me.

Let me entreat you my dear friend, to preſs forward, and ſtrive to believe. Leave reaſoning, and come nakedly to Jeſus Chriſt, *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

I know I am unworthy to ſpeak in my Maſter's name, yet I cannot contentedly ſee you groping in the dark, without telling you of the Sun of Righteouſneſs. Indeed there is no humility in ſaying I am a pattern of mercy: 'tis plain truth, and I feel it: if he ſaves me, he is not willing that any ſhould periſh. *Now is the accepted time* for you. Caſt not theſe words behind you, for God is willing you ſhould now be ſaved. I am grieved, my ſoul mourns, becauſe you dare not ſay "*The Lord is my righteouſneſs.*" You ſtand at a diſtance; you do not venture on him. O commit your ſoul unto the Lord. He is able and he will keep it, and preſent it ſpotleſs at his Father's right hand. While you ſeek him in his ordinances, *ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of God.*

Pray for me that I may be kept from the evil that is in the world. I hope to remember you (if living) before my Father's throne, while

I am yours, &c.

LETTER LXXXIII.

My dear Brother,

I SHOULD have anſwered your kind letter before, but ſoon after the receipt of it, I ſet off for N———,

N———, and am but lately returned. I have been sometimes tempted to leave off writing to any one, unless I was obliged to it; because I have thought, what I could say was so useless, that my friends might spend their time much better, than in reading my letters: But it is a base humility; a plant not of God's right-hand planting; and I must not yield. Indeed, I appear as it were, a beast before God; and often wonder, that any one takes notice of me. I feel myself more than ever I did, to be poor, and blind, and naked: but poor as I am, like the widow, let me cast in my mites, and wish you good luck in the name of the Lord. Right glad am I, that you have so sweet a sense of the pardoning love of God. Glory be to him for free grace!

" That we—Children of wrath and sin,
" We should be call'd the sons of God!"

O! my brother! do you not feel the power of that word? *then shall you loath yourselves in your own eyes, when I am pacified towards you.* I think I am sick of wandering away from the fountain of life: I want to be a garden inclosed. When will my Lord appear, and lead captivity captive. He hath received gifts for me, rebellious as I am; and here will I rest. He hath chosen me in the furnace of affliction. I am the Lord's; for he hath bought me with the price of his precious blood. And now,

" My feeble soul shall win the day,
" Tho' death and hell obstruct the way."

But satan thrusts hard at me, that I might fall. I have need to grasp my shield; to hold fast my confidence.

confidence. I told you before, that the enemy would most of all assault you at this quarter: therefore, Paul wisely saith, *Above all take the shield of faith.* By faith, we shall remove mountains, stop the mouths of lions, and out of weakness be made strong.

This laying hold of the strength of God, is wonderful: it made one cry out of old, "Through Christ I shall do valiantly: I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." What would have become of so insignificant a creature as me, had it not been for this? O, Christ is all in all to my soul!

"When I appear in yonder cloud,
"With all his favour'd throng;
"Then I shall sing more sweet, more loud,
"And Christ shall be my song."

O learn to love a precious Christ! you can never love him too much. Look on him, 'till you are changed into his image; till you are sealed to the day of redemption; I mean, till you are swallowed up in love.

The work of God goes on at L——. Many are awakened. Many are converted. Many are added to the church of such, as I believe, shall be saved. The fields are white, ready unto harvest: pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth more faithful labourers. I believe satan's kingdom has got a severe blow, the Lord be praised! I must tell you something remarkable: one that had been mourning under a sense of sin a long time, was lately taken ill. For three days and three nights she was in strong agony of body and soul. With but very little intermission, she cried out all that time, *Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!*

At

At last, raising her voice, she shouted aloud, "Amen! Hallelujah! Glory be to God in the highest!" and fell back, and expired.——Let us join her, and cry Hallelujah, 'till with all the glorious throng above, we more perfectly sing to all eternity, "*Worthy is the Lamb to receive honour, and blessing, and praise.*" Even so Lord Jesus. Amen.

I am, &c.

LETTER LXXXIV.

My dear Friend,

YOUR kindness of the 5th ult. now lies before me, and was as a cordial; for when I received it, it gave great comfort and relief to my mind, at that time under some distress. Indeed, I have suffered many things lately, for want of the spirit of Eli. I do not find my evil nature will suffer me to say, "*It is the Lord, let him do what he will.*" But upon every little cross, my will is ready to rise in rebellion against God: I am fit to murmur, complain, and become impatient upon every cross that visits me. O how different is my temper of mind, from the disposition of the blessed, the redeeming Jesus! He was meek and lowly in heart; I am peevish and haughty in spirit. His whole life was made up of a series of temptations, of afflictions spiritual and temporal, at which he repined not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously: but I am an unresigned and wretched creature, without a due conformity of temper and disposition to my Lord. O that I could always say with sincerity and

and truth, " *Not as I will, but as thou wilt, O Lord.*

This is my preſent ſtate, in which I am not without hope, that that Saviour who died for me, will, of his free grace and tender love, deſtroy all theſe works of ſatan which ſtill remain in me: that he will waſh me in his blood, ſanctify my nature, and in his due time beat down ſatan under my feet. But we muſt patiently wait the Lord's coming, and *He that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry.*

I am your ſincere friend.

LETTER LXXXV.

Dear Sir,

I Received yours, and can aſſure you it came in an acceptable time.

" O what is friendſhip! why impreſt
" On my weak, wretched, dying breaſt!"

You are welcome to act the part of a patient, and trouble me (as you call it) with your complaints: you may depend upon the beſt aſſiſtance your unworthy friend is able to afford.

I am ſorry your haſte of unbelief cauſes you to have hard thoughts of him, who is love in the abſtract. Your reaſons for ſuch a conduct are not ſufficient. Forget not to offer praiſe for the mercies you have already received: by this means will you be enabled quietly to wait, and at the ſame time, earneſtly to contend, for an increaſe of that faith, which will produce in you a greater abundance

dance of all the fruits of the spirit. As a means to this great end, pray for patience with yourself. Your uneasiness many times arises, when you remember those mercies by which you are distinguished from many who are around you, from considering what ungrateful returns you have made for this waste of love.

It would be well for you to dwell more upon the loving-kindness of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. This will have upon your mind a transforming influence. You will perhaps reply, "But you little know how many are my hinderances."—I am not entirely ignorant of what hurtful impressions your mind is susceptible: and I must intreat you, if you intend to grow in grace, to set a double watch upon that dangerous avenue to your soul, your imagination. You seem very sensible of the bad effects of giving loose to this excursive faculty: and if you narrowly examine your own heart, you will perhaps find, that that insensibility to the things of God, of which I have heard you complain, is occasioned by your imagination being too much employed with things of a contrary nature.

It is a great thing to keep the heart with all diligence, for truly of it are the issues of life. You will find occasion often to remember the words of our Lord; *He that will be my disciple, must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.* Your happiness will greatly depend upon a right division of your time. Your business requires many hours of the day: may the Lord help you to employ what is given up to his immediate service to the best advantage.

It is our mercy, that we have not an high-priest that cannot sympathize with our infirmities, but who was in all points tempted like unto us; and

the

the reason for it is given by the apostle, *That he might be able to succour those who are tempted.*

I am, with the greatest sincerity,

Your friend, &c.

LETTER LXXXVI.

Dear Sir,

LET nothing discourage you from the pursuit of that state of perfection, which is attainable to all those who seek the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth; and then no difficulty will be found so great, as to be unsurmountable by his grace. This I have in some measure experienced: for sure there was never a son of Adam called to a sense of so many sins as I had really committed. My whole life was nothing but a varied scene of defection from God: so that my soul was spotted like the leopard, or rather infected like the leper's skin.

But yet, my friend, notwithstanding all this evil in my nature, I can say, and that with a reasonable assurance, that *the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.* My sins were as scarlet, but the redeeming Jesus hath made them whiter than snow. *I have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and that his mercy endureth for ever.* With me the work of grace has been carried on in a regular progressive manner, first by strong convictions, then by justification through the blood of Christ, and now, I hope, the Lord is carrying on the work of sanctification. These states have their different temptations, and peculiar trials, under which there seems nothing so desirable as the grace of an humble, meek, and quiet spirit. When we can take up our cross daily

daily with a similar spirit to our Saviour, and say with freedom of heart, Father, thy will be done; then shall we be able to rejoice in temptations, and experience the truth of our Lord's words, *His yoke is easy, and his burthen light.*

My trials are chiefly of the internal kind: these daily afflict me; but the Lord delivereth me out of all. And what is singular is, that in all the anxiety and distress under which I labour, I have not the least disposition to complain to man: nor can I observe that any person conceives I suffer, or is apprehensive of my trouble.

I hope the work of grace prospers in the hearts of our friends here. The Lord is loving to every man; and would we cast out the various idols which possess our souls, and by his sovereign aid destroy the antient inhabitants of the land, then would he abide with us for ever. But alas! how like the Israelites of old, do we retain too great a friendship for the former images that engaged our affections; and nothing but divine grace can restrain us from worshipping the antient idols of Canaan. How happy should we be, would we eschew our pleasures, and continually resist all self-love, then should we go on from strength to strength.

I am, with due respect, yours sincerely.

LETTER LXXXVII.

Dear Sir,

THOUGH it is impossible for words to express the sense I have of the many obligations I am under to you, yet I must make the attempt, by thanking you for the kind enquiry you made in

your letters to Mr. *** after the ſtate of my ſoul. I can ſay little elſe but *Praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits.* He has not only ſaved my life, but is ſtill crowning that life, he ſo wonderfully preſerved, with his loving kindneſs and hourly mercies. I cannot diſtruſt the tender mercy of my God, either in time or in eternity: and I can truly ſay, that every bleſſing I have experienced, or can deſire for myſelf, I wiſh and pray may deſcend upon you I hope you do not forget to pray that I may glorify God with my body and ſpirit which are doubly his. I find I cannot love him as I would; but I rejoice in the proſpect of that bliſsful hour, when I ſhall caſt the crown he gives at his feet, and cry without ceaſing, with unwearied ardour, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive all honour, and glory, and praiſe.* The thought of this employ, oftentimes overwhelms me in joy that is unſpeakable and full of glory.

O dear Sir, praiſe the Lord with me, until we magnify his name for ever. I truſt I ſhall meet your happy ſpirit in that day, entire and lacking nothing; without ſpot or blemiſh, before the throne. May he who ſits thereon *direct your heart into his perfect love, and to a patient waiting for the coming of Chriſt.*

Yours, &c.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

To the SOCIETY at NORWICH.

Dear Brethren, Jan. 21, 1761.

GRACE, Mercy, and Peace be to you, from God even our Father, and from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt

Christ. Your past lives are a year longer, and your future lives a year shorter than when I wrote last unto you. Are you proportionably advanced in grace, and reduced in nature?

You are many of you, already born of God, washed, justified, and sanctified; and you hope to be glorified through the spirit, and merit of Jesus Christ. Thus much you experience: therefore you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, an holy nation. What for? *That you might shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness, into his marvellous light, and out of the kingdom of Satan unto God; to receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified.* Thus writes Paul, thus writes Peter. Therefore shew *you* the necessary and blessed effects, which result from such a state. Let all your thoughts, words, and actions, be in Christ, through Christ, and unto Christ. All so done, is well done; and though undeserving of any reward; yet is so acceptable to our dear Saviour, that it has the promise, both of this life, and of that which is to come.

If the term sinless perfection be disgustful to some, sure christian perfection will be grateful to all who know Christ. 'Tis to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This is scriptural perfection. This is the word of God. This is his command. Yea; and it is natural to the regenerate to desire this. Are you the sons of God? Should you not then be followers, (imitators) of God as dear children? Is Christ your head, holy? should not you his members be holy also? Are you endued with the gift of the spirit? should you not then bring forth the fruit of the spirit? Consider all this. Why should we neglect, refuse, or object to be what is most interesting, and ad-

vantageous in our ſtate? And ſo neceſſary, that though we cannot be ſaved for it, yet we cannot be ſaved without it. Are ye trees of righteouſneſs? Let the trees be known by their fruit.

Though you are in a ſtate of ſalvation, yet muſt you ſtrive, to work out your ſalvation with fear and trembling. Give, my brethren, give all diligence to add to your faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; to patience, godlineſs; to godlineſs, brotherly-kindneſs; to brotherly-kindneſs, charity. For if theſe things be in you, and abound, they make you, that you ſhall neither be barren, or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Thus let us ſee what our Lord and we ſhall bring it to at laſt. Are ye trees of righteouſneſs? Let the trees be known by their fruit.

'Tis well known, we muſt go through manifold temptations into the kingdom. Our foes will diſpute it with us, every inch of the ground to heaven. But what then? Greater is he, who is in us, than he who is in the world. You may, nay you muſt, ſtand in the evil day; and when you have done all ſtand. If you don't, the fault is your own. The effect your ſhame. We are not tempted above that we are able. We never fall, we never ſin, through the want, but through the abuſe of grace. Nor is it enough to ſtand our ground, but we muſt conquer alſo, or not enjoy the crown of life. Therefore when the fleſh tempts you, flee, and pray; when the world tempts you, watch and pray; and when the devil tempts you, reſiſt and pray. So ſhall ye be more than conquerors. Are ye trees of righteouſneſs? Let the trees be known by their fruit.

Suffer me to preſcribe to you a method, how to live one day well. It may ſerve for every day after, by

by repeating it. Nor will I presume to lay a burthen on your shoulders, and not touch it with my own fingers.

As soon as you awake in the morning, employ half an hour in five things. Bless God for the mercies of the night past; pray for the blessings of a new day; examine well your own heart; meditate upon some spiritual subject; and lastly, plan the business of the approaching day. Then rise at four o'clock, but never later than five, if well. While you put on your cloaths, praise, or pray, mentally, but suitably to your state. Then spend another half hour in secret meditation, praise, and prayer. After this call your family together, read a chapter, and as you have ability and leisure, expound it to them. Then sing a hymn, and conclude with prayer. Pray always before and after meat: thus take the curse from off your victuals; and bless God for the benefit of them. Begin, proceed in, and lay by work, thus. Begin with that which should never cease, prayer in your mind; while you are at your work, meditate, praise, or pray, or converse religiously with those about you: this will not hinder, but further your labour. As often as you can, retire a few minutes to prayer, at nine o'clock in the morning, and three in the afternoon. It would be well to spend a little time in prayer with your family, immediately after dinner. In the evening constantly observe the same order of devotion in your family, as in the morning. At going to bed, revise the thoughts, words, and actions of the past day. What appears amiss, beg pardon for: what is well bless God alone for: and never close your eyes to sleep, with any unforgiven sin upon your conscience. Are you trees of righteousness? Let the trees be known by their fruit.

Never neglect this, or some such method of walking with God. Do all feelingly, fervently, and devoutly, as from the spirit of God in you. Custom will make it familiar, easy, and pleasant to you. And if you thus spend every week-day, you will no doubt keep the sabbath-day holy. You will surely attend the word, the Lord's table, and all occasional meetings. All this will help you to attain to the measure of the stature, of perfect men in Christ. Are ye trees of righteousness? Let the trees be known by their fruit.

In a word, diligently use every means, and as diligently exercise every measure of grace. Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. In every thing, invariably aim at his glory, out of a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned. Are ye trees of righteousness? Let the trees be known by their fruit.

To the everlasting praise of our dear Jesus be it known to you, that his work of grace prospers in these parts. Our congregations are generally large: new members are added to our societies, and our old ones go on in full assurance, and some of them in the triumph of faith to heaven. Are we trees of righteousness? May we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Pray for me, and I'll pray for you, who am

Your affectionate Brother,

W. G.

LET

LETTER LXXXIX.

My dear Father, Dublin, July 23, 1755.

THO' I am far distant from you in person, yet I am intimately near you in spirit and affection.

At present I write unto you, with abundance of tears flowing from my eyes, proceeding from the fullness of love in my heart. My intent in writing unto you, is not to procure your favour, that I know you give me out of paternal affection and a sense of duty; nor for your substance that I do not want; but my business with you is far more important; I beseech you, O my dear Father, to seek the *one thing needful.* To lay aside every weight, and the sin (viz. wordly mindedness) which does most easily beset you: And to use all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Renouncing your own righteousness, *which is but as filthy rags*, make application to Christ, that you may be interested in his blood, and righteousness. 'Tis by faith in his blood we are justified; 'tis by faith in his blood we are sanctified: yea, it is the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin.

Oh! that I could but impart unto you some of the sweetness, and comfort, which I now feel in the enjoyment of the love of God. Tho' it would be hell to me, to return unto a natural unregenerate state again; yet I would willingly part with the love of God, for a little time, that you might know what it is to love him, and to have Christ formed in your heart by faith. I could with St. Paul, wish myself, (temporally) accursed for you and the rest of my relations according to the flesh. But though I cannot, by this or any other means I can use, merit this blessing for you, or confer

it

it upon you; yet there is the same unexhaustible fullness of mercy, and love in Christ for you, as I and many more have found. If you turn heartily unto him, you will, you assuredly will meet with the same welcome, and blessed treatment that others have done. There is balm in Gilead: his arm is not shortened, that it cannot save; or his ear grown heavy that it cannot hear, but he has the same compassionate heart, cordial love, and exquisite tenderness toward returning prodigals, and self righteousness renouncing pharisees, as he had seventeen hundred years ago, when affectionately crying: *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, and sorrowfully complaining, *ye will not come to me that ye might have life*.

Yet as I have often told you, when present, so I tell you now I am absent, that you must come unto Christ here on earth, in the way of repentance, and faith; or you can never ascend to his kingdom and glory in heaven.

Christ must come down into our hearts, by his spirit; or we can never arise to happiness in eternity, not even by his merit. Our hearts, must become his throne here, if ever we have a seat in his throne hereafter. Converted we must be, or be condemned. Changed from nature to grace, while living, or change our place from earth, to hell, when dead. Without renovation in time, no resurrection to eternal happiness in eternity. What must dogs and swine do in the palace of the king of heaven, and in the garden of paradise, and such we really are, until renewed in the image of God.

I know you are an honest man among your neighbours, and a loving and respectful father unto your children: but honesty is not regeneration.

tion. Though you are civilized, you are not ſanctified. Do not take it ill. Think me not undutiful, becauſe faithful unto my conſcience, leaſt of all think me unkind, becauſe I tell you the truth. Ye muſt (notwithſtanding) be born again.

Pray attend the word of God where it is preached in *the demonſtration of the ſpirit, and of power*; and do not by any means neglect private or family prayer. May the bleſſing of God attend every means you uſe, and make them ſpirit and life unto you: may he give you grace, with peace in this world, and everlaſting happineſs in the next, is the unfeigned prayer, of

Your dutiful Son.

LETTER XC.

Cork, March 23, 1756.

My very dear, and loving Father,

YOURS I received with thankfulneſs. I might inform you how much I eſteem you, and how great pleaſure the hearing from ſo kind, and indulgent a parent gives me: but this would neither be as expreſſive of my true affection, or ſo uſeful and beneficial to you, as to watch for your ſoul, and pray for your ſalvation. I am thoroughly convinced this is the trueſt inſtance of rational and exalted kindneſs. Every claim to this amiable character is quite defective and vain, if it does not extend to our ſpiritual intereſts, and our eternal welfare.

I hope, my dear Father, you do not neglect *the one thing needful*. All worldly things, tho' of the moſt excellent kinds, are but like the moſt

deſpicable

deſpicable chaff, when compared with the bleſſings God beſtows upon his children here, and the ineſtimable treaſure he hath laid up for them hereafter. Oh! how dark and gloomy is that man's ſtate, who has not an intereſt in our dear Redeemer, tho' he may ſwim in the river of ſenſual pleaſure, baſk in the warmeſt beams of human honour, and have the ſpoils of kingdoms at his feet, compared to his, whoſe privilege it is to live under the benign influences of heaven, in the proſpect of glory, and in divine communion with his God, tho' cloathed in rags, and ſituate with Lazarus upon the dunghill.

I have delayed, for ſome time, to write unto you, expecting Mr. W. coming to this place, in order that I might inform you when and how I hope to come into England; but his having been prevented in his intention of coming here, has rendered me incapable of giving you any information, notwithſtanding my deſire.

I unfeignedly thank God for a meaſure of my uſual ſtate of health, and diſpoſition of mind, tho' neither exempt from bodily pains, ſoul conflicts, or outward croſſes, yet the Lord gives me ſtrength according to my day; and, which is not a little to my comfort, is pleaſed, in ſome ſmall meaſure, to give ſucceſs to my unworthy labours. Some ſinners which were far off, are brought nigh to God by the blood of Chriſt; and others convinced of their diſtance from him, and has an earneſt deſire to return unto him.

I need not tell you, that I think often of, and deſire to be with you; but while this cannot be, God will give me contentment: however, may you, and all my relations and friends, live under the heavenly light, and healing wings of Jeſus Chriſt. May you have brighter and brighter manifeſtations

manifeſtations of his immenſe and amiable perfections; and may you, by theſe heavenly views, grow daily in his holy and divine image; then your happineſs will be ſuch as is wiſhed for,

By your moſt obliged, and dutiful Son, &c

LETTER XCI.

My dear friend, Jan. 19, 1758.

WHAT can comfort a ſoul that is painfully diſtreſſed for want of love? It may be ſome allay to one's miſery, to think that others love that God whom we would love, but cannot. What can afflict that ſoul which is free from every creature, and fixed on God alone? One can ſcarcely think that any could be ſo baſe, with reſpect to God, and wretched with regard to himſelf, as not to love him; and yet this wretchedneſs I feel. Writing juſt now on my own condition, preſſes it deeper on my troubled heart. I had no ſooner come to this concluſion, I do not love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but it occurred to me, yet others do: here I found a pleaſing ſatisfaction. I then bleſſed God for you, and others of my friends, who offer him what is due from all, but what I ſtill withhold, *the love of the whole heart.*

As the ſtate I apprehend your ſoul to be in, affords me matter of praiſe, and actually excites it; ſo the ſtate you muſt judge my ſoul to be in, from the account I have given of it, will afford you matter of prayer, and ſhould actually excite it, while it occaſions your pity.

I formerly threatened you with letters, knowing, that if you have patience, it was not given

to be wrapped up in a napkin, but for exercise: and now I am going about the performance of it, I may tell you before hand, I am wretched, and desire your prayers, shall be my subject: the various parts of which, I shall unfold, explain and insist on, as I see occasion. But you may expect I shall do this in different humours; you must look for nothing of unchangeableness in me, till my worst, my oldest enemy, self, expires.

Perfect love, unspotted charity; not to be subject to any inordinate affections, any irregular desire of any kind, in any degree: to have no one affection of the soul at any time exercised on an improper object, or in an undue manner; to love every creature in a due subordination to the love of God, and each in their order, according to that measure of his image which they bear, and the relation they stand in unto him; I say, these are things so great for a sinner to attain to, as to be almost incredible. Yet if you can, in cool blood, affirm each of these particulars of yourself, I know not how I could, consistent with that charity, which hopeth, and believeth all things, disbelieve you

But how shall I attain them? Methinks I hear you earnestly exhort me. Cast off: press on: fight: wrestle, and be still. All this is ever sounding in my ears; but alas! I find no door of hope. The old man, if not the strong one, has still possession, and much goods aid up in store for many years. No straits can expell him; for however closely he may be besieged without, he has provision enough to subsist on within: and he can resist all power, but omnipotence. You say there needs no other. Engage this on your side, and you shall be more than a conqueror. How? By prayer. I do pray; but

but it seems as though he regarded it not. Join me in the petition, and it may be I shall prevail. Thus you see, tis proper my subject should be--- I am wretched, pray for me.

Still, that you may not be found less in the sight of God, than your greatest friend or flatterer, whether yourself or another, either says you are, or thinks you to be, is the ardent prayer of

Your friend and brother, &c.

LETTER XCII.

To Mr. THOMAS HANBY, occasioned by the sudden Death of several near Relations, by Mr. THOMAS OLIVERS.

My very dear Brother,

A Few days ago, I was informed of the awful breach which divine Providence lately made in your family: a breach, which loudly demands the greatest pity, and softest sympathy of every friend.—To lose the wife of your youth,—or your first-born and only son,—or, even, a distant relation,—is doubtless, a heavy trial; but to have *all these* taken away, and that by a *sing'e* stroke, is a trial of the *first magnitude:* and every one in such circumstances *must feel*, unless he be *past feeling*. I doubt not but *you* feel your share. Your heart is young and unexperienced in such scenes of woe, and therefore they fall on *you* with *double* weight. O! it is well you have Omnipotence to support you, or you would *sink* beneath your load! you would *fall* to rise *no more*.

The cloud of this dispensation may, in all probability, be so *thick* at present, that you cannot see the hand which directed it. But it shall soon become *transparent*; and *then* you shall see the hand, and heart of your *best* Father; and acknowledge, it was unmixed goodness, which *intended* the stroke, and unerring wisdom, which *directed* it so *near* your heart. *Till* this appears, be *silent*; and when it does, you *shall adore*. You have often recommended to others, *Not to sorrow as those who have no hope*. Let me recommend the same to you. Let those tears which evidence your tender affection for your late friend, equally evidence your submission to your divine Father. *You have heard of the patience of Job.* With what deep reverence! with what unfeigned subjection! did he receive the *repeated* tidings of his *complicated* calamities! *The Lord gave*, said he, *and the Lord hath taken away*; *and blessed be the name of the Lord.* And when he was strongly solicited to murmur at the dispensation, and blaspheme its Author, he rejected it with abhorrence; *What!* said he, *shall I receive good at the hand of God, and shall I not receive evil?* It is then added, to his immortal honour, *In all this Job sinned not.* May God say the same of you! "I took away a distant relation,—*and in this* he sinned not. I took away his son, his only son—and *in this* he sinned not. I then tore from his bleeding heart, a *tender* wife, *lately* entwined about it—and *in this* he sinned not. The *first* messenger of heavy tidings was scarce arrived, when lo! a *second* followed; and ere he had delivered his more awful message, behold! a *third* trod upon his heels—and in *all this* he sinned not." May you thus have a testimony that you please God, and it shall turn to your honour before assembled worlds!

If you have been a means of helping your friend to conquer the difficulties of life and death, she is now *blessing* the day she became yours. And I hope you were—and that she, and her new born son, are now two shining forms before the throne, rejoicing in the presence of the Lamb. May you follow them to your Father's country!—May you weather out every storm, which shall rise against you on the ocean of time!—and when the voyage of life is over, they shall *meet* and *hail* you on the celestial strand, and bid you *ten thousand* welcomes to their blessed abodes:—and it may be, when the all-bountiful Redeemer, all-righteous Judge, shall assign you your reward, that they will be officious in arraying you in the garments of light; and in adorning your head with an immortal wreath; and in putting the emblem of victory, and a golden harp into your hand.—O that I was master of the language of immortality! O that I could speak like the disembodied! how loudly would I call on you! how *powerfully* would I persuade you, to *glow!* to *burn!* with *ardent desire*; with *holy affections*; with *flaming zeal*—for that *better world!* for that *better company!* for that *better enjoyment.*

Imagine, for a few moments, that your late companion is permitted to do this, and that you hear her addressing you in the following manner.

"O thou blessed among mortals! who wast, for a few short-lived moments, my dearest friend on earth---thou findest by *sad*, but I by *joyful* experience, that the sweetest earthly enjoyment is *soon* over. Thou seest as through a glass darkly, but I with the full blaze of eternal day, that all on earth which mortals call *good* and *great*, is only emptiness, vanity, and disappointment. We, the inhabitants of unclouded day, look down from our

exalted ſummits, and behold *your world* and *all its glory*, only as a *ſpeck* of *darkneſs*, *encompaſſed* by an *infinite ocean of light*---We ſee how *cloſely* eternity beſets you on *every ſide* ; while you, like millions of intelligent atoms, *croud* each other within your *little ſphere* ; thouſands of which are daily hovering *on the verge*, while other thouſands are *paſſing over !* ---We likewiſe ſee, with eyes of pity, how eagerly you toil amidſt *darkneſs*, *ſnares*, and *deaths*, and all for the *trifles of a moment*, while eternity, *greedy* eternity ! not ſatisfied with the ſlaughter of ſix thouſand years, ſtill waits, with its wide extended jaws, to ſwallow up *all ſucceeding generations !*---O ! how does all heaven pity your folly, in *ſlighting* the awful concerns of eternity ; and in deſpiſing the infinite ſource of all bleſſedneſs ; only for the *bubbles* and *ſhadows* of a *diſordered world*.

But, with ineffable pleaſure, we behold the happy few, who have declared eternal war with the prince of darkneſs; who deſpiſe the empty enjoyments of a vain world ; who riſe ſuperior to their own degeneracy, and ſeek their all in God.---Such are eſteemed by you, O ye blind mortals ! as the filth and off-ſcouring of *your world* ; but we, through all our different orders, eſteem them as ſome of the *brighteſt ornaments* of *ours*. You long to drive them from earth ; but we, to receive them into heaven. And when he who bought them with his blood, ſhall ſign their happy diſmiſſion ; a detachment of celeſtial meſſengers, a convoy of flaming guards, ſhall ſafely guide them through death, and ſwiftly conduct them home. Then, then ſhall the living doors ſpontaneouſly fly open to admit them---and all the *tongues*, and *eyes*, and *hearts* of heaven, ſhall bid them a thouſand welcomes---while the mighty

mighty concave, made vocal by the universal acclamations, reverberates the sound.---Till then, their lot is to *labour* and *suffer*; to *obey* God, to *resist* the devil, to *renounce* the world, to *crucify* themselves. O! with what soft regard, tender pity and deep compassion, do we behold their toil, their difficulties, their enemies, their dangers! yea, how do we almost tremble, to see their everlasting *fate* so often weighed in a *doubtful* balance! but all the mighty powers of heaven rejoice, and through all their countless myriads, bow in grateful homage, to that exalted *Name* which preponderates the scale.

"But, O thou! the late partner of my weal and woe, whose friendship followed me through life, through death, and still follows me beyond the grave; what *floods!* what *oceans* of immortal pleasure! fills! *overflows* and *deluges* my disembodied capacity on *thy* account! O how I exult and triumph, on seeing thy face towards Zion! with what inconceivable extacy do I behold thee labouring up the skies, and beckoning to thy fellows, to follow after! Joy---extacy---transport---glory---*increase*;---and *wider!*---and *still wider* expand my happy spirit, on every prospect of thy arrival to this happy world! It exalts my most exalted joys;---it heightens my highest praise, to think that my dearest earthly friend shall soon shine brighter than ten thousand suns; and that ere long we shall sit down together, at *Immanuel's* feet, to recount the dangers we have escaped on earth, and to repeat the story of redeeming love.

"Till then, go on in the name of thy great Master. Let nothing on earth *obstruct thy passage*, or *retard thy motion*, towards a blissful immortality. Let thy eye be ever fixt on that sacred ray which proceeds from the throne of God, and which, in

great mercy, glimmers through the skies. Let *it* direct thy steps through all the darkness and dangers of time, and point out thy way to this world of glorious light; and when thou arrivest, whole floods of endless day shall be poured on thy astonished sight. Let thy ears be always open to the sacred calls of thy divine Master, and let them continually attend to the humble complaints of his afflicted servants; and in a short time thy enraptured soul shall be filled with the sounds of these mighty, these *thundering* hallelujahs, which burst for ever around the tremendous throne. Let thy tongue, now feeble and faultering, and which shall soon be silent in the grave, publish abroad through *all the earth*, the *Love* which astonishes *all heaven*. Publish, O publish! its exalted heights, its profound depth; its immeasurable length and breadth!---Tell the rebellious sons of earth, of *immensity* contracted to a span!---Tell them of *Infinity* crushed beneath *their* load!---Tell them of *Immortality* dying in their stead!---Employ in this service, thy *best strains*, and thy *loudest accents*; and, in a short time, thou shalt have a tongue of celestial fire, and a voice which shall reach the most exalted of all our radiant orbs.---Let thy *whole soul*; thy *whole strength*; thy *whole time*; be employed for *Him*, who *lived!* who *bled!* who *dyed* for thee! O! be active as fire; be humble as the dust; be serious as death; be solemn as the grave; Let thy faith be like *Abraham*'s; thy meekness like *Moses*'s; thy patience like *Job*'s; thy prayer like *Elijah*'s; thy repentance like *David*'s; thy zeal like St. *Paul*'s; thy love like St. *John*'s; thy praise like a Seraph's; ---and thy joy shall soon be like mine!---And O what rising joy!---what *swelling* pleasure! what streaming, shining! *flaming* glory fills this place! ---How mighty! how huge is the reward of heaven!

ven!---*All* is *infinite*---All is eternal---And *all* is *mine!*---Adieu." And now, as she returns, imagine you hear the *lessening* sounds, "HALLELUJAH---HALLELUJAH---Hallelujah."

Thus she being dead, yet speaketh. May the important admonition have its due effect on your mind! May the sound of it enter your very soul, and follow you wherever you go: so shall your *abundant loss* become your *more abundant gain*!

The advantages intended you by this visitation, are, first, to convince you, more deeply, of the mutability of all earthly comforts. Through the medium of this dispensation, you see more clearly how fluctuating these things are, and how little they are to be depended on. You see that riches, honours, friends, health and life, may be at our command this hour; and in the next, make themselves wings and fly away. With what clearness do you now behold that all flesh is grass, and the glory of man as *the flower of the grass!* With what advantage do you now read that *the fashion of this world passeth away*: passeth away, even, while we are beholding it; and that with *such speed*, that ere we have a *full view*, it is out of our sight. Happy are they who have a *divine confidence* that an *unchangeable God* is their Father; and who have a *lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away!* May that confidence and hope increase in you daily, and be preserved stedfast unto the end!

A second advantage intended, is, that you may sit more loose to the world and its enjoyments. Wretched as these enjoyments are, there is something in them so peculiarly ensnaring, that it is almost impossible to possess them and not be destroyed: and it is much to be feared, that thousands, who have overcome *every other* difficulty, will,

will, after all, be dashed in pieces on *this rock*. But this is not for want of caution: the sacred admonitions are for ever sounding in our ears; *Be not conformed to this world*; *Set your affections on things above, and not on things on earth*; *Love not the world, nor the things of the world*; *Little children keep yourselves from idols*. Now, if after all these fatherly instructions, and kind commands, we still incline to wander, the blessed God will hedge up our way with briers, if we break through these, he will in mercy, conceal some thorn under our favourite flower, or mix our sweet delight with gall. If this proves ineffectual, and the little impertinences of earth still cleave to us, even, like the flesh to the bone; in this case, God is *obliged* to put us to *more pain*, and (in order to prevent our eternal ruin) to save us by *such* means as are like *tearing the flesh from the bones*. O what a privilege is *yours at present*. Your most gracious Father is *now* telling you, that you *must* be all his own; that he *will* have *all* your heart; that you *shall* be *fully* blessed.—— And rather than the *world* or *sin* or *satan* should *destroy*, or *hurt*, or even *touch* you to your disadvantage, that he will interpose with all his wisdom, and power, and mercy, and truth; and that nothing, but the most wilful obstinacy, shall be able to harm you. O what rich mercy and astonishing goodness is this! and how unutterably great is your privilege! May it teach you to praise and adore its divine Author, with the most pure and warm affection! May it teach you to watch with the strictest attention over your heart; and to keep at the utmost distance from the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life! And may it teach you to look on yourself only as a stranger and sojourner on earth;

earth; only as a poor pilgrim, who is travelling through a vale of tears, in search of a better country; who is urging his way to eternal life, through the valley of the shadow of death!

A third advantage intended, is, to quicken you in your way; to cause you to mend your pace and double your diligence. We all have constant need of this. Our work is so *important*, and our strength so *little*; and our time so short, that we ought to be *broad awake*, and *all alive* and on *full stretch* continually. But this is not pleasing to flesh and blood; not agreeable to our wretched hearts: these love to be at rest and quiet, and ever incline us to fall asleep. To prevent this, we have need of all the grace of God, and of the assistance of all his dispensations. Affliction (your present dispensation) is of singular use in this case; because, thereby, the soul is purged of that grossness which occasions its dulness and stupidity. Hence we often find, that persons in affliction are *zealous* and *active*, who, at other times, are *cold* and *negligent*. With what fervency do they then call upon God? With what steadiness watch over their own hearts? With what impartiality examine themselves? With what indignation vow against sin? With what holy resolution devote themselves to God? And with what deep humility, seriousness and circumspection walk before him?

How often have *you* desired God to help you, *thus* to double your diligence? How often have you *begged*, with *strong crying and tears*, that he would do it by *any* means, so it might be done effectually.

And behold! he is now answering your prayer: he is now granting the request of your lips and the desire of your heart. May the means by which his

his infinite and adorable wisdom is promoting this desirable end, promote it more abundantly day by day! May you continually increase in zeal for the glory of God, and in pity for a dying world! May you see, in the clearest light, what numberless scenes of misery! what universal ruin and destruction, covers the whole earth! And may you see how the common enemy lieth in wait for unwary souls: how he first captivates; then blindfolds them; then drags them in his cursed chain to eternal death; and then *triumphs over his prey*, and *insults the throne of God!* May holy indignation against this enemy of God, this devourer of human-kind, set you all on fire! And may the deepest compassion, and the most generous concern for your fellow sufferers, soften and melt and enlarge your soul! And may *this* cause you to sound the name of JESUS, and publish his great SALVATION, with all your might! O may you fly with the sacred TIDINGS, to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south! And may you esteem it your highest honour, and make it your chief concern, to be instrumental in plucking dying souls out of the jaws of destruction; to be instrumental in *turning them from darkness unto light, and from the power of satan to the living God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by Faith which is in Jesus.*

That you may thus act your part on earth; and quit the stage of life with honour; and rejoice in the day of accounts; and be for ever with them whom your soul loveth, is the sincere and fervent prayer of your sympathizing

Friend and Brother,

Aug. 19, 1766. T. O.

LETTER XCIII.

My much respected Friend, Feb. 29, 1760.

A Deep sense of my own inability, and your great superiority to me, almost in every thing, has, till now, forbid my writing unto you. I can sincerely rank myself among them who have reason to bless God for your coming into this country. If I ever shall again be favoured with your company and conversation, you will, I trust, have less reason to chide me for those things, you so many times judged reproveable in me. You had not been gone above two days, before I was convinced of several things, which I ingenuously acknowledge did not before appear amiss. Whatever I have been, I am not an Antinomian now. I never was more sensible of my dependance upon God, for all things. I think it my indispensible duty to ask, at his beneficent hands, the minutest blessing my necessity calls for. I am, as you once justly observed, but a child in holiness; but I can truly say, I desire and design, to be an obedient one. When I know my Father's will, I immediately apply myself to the doing, or suffering of it with all that power he gives me. My happiness, distinct from every other consideration, consists in doing his blessed will. You may remember to have told me, I should meet with many trials: this has indeed been exactly true. My experience has been something extraordinary; but let me with gratitude acknowledge, my strength has been equal to my every day. I find an increase of every thing which is true, just, virtuous, commendable,

able, and of good report. This I ſpeak to the praiſe of God. Of how great things is the human mind capable. I did not think once, that my faculties could have been raiſed thus, from the ruins of the fall. My deſires and averſions are, I truſt, turned toward their right and proper objects. The Lord makes thoſe diſcoveries to my underſtanding, which draw my affections to things above. My very body is a temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and is employed in the ſervice of God. Help me my dear friend, to praiſe God for theſe ineſtimable mercies. Pray excuſe whatever you ſee amiſs in this. I promiſe myſelf great ſatisfaction, when I ſhall have the happineſs of being a ſpectator of their improvement at L---ds. Give my kind love to all friends, accept the ſame yourſelf,

From your ever loving,
and faithful friend, &c. &c.

LETTER XCIV.

My dear, and much reſpected Father,
St. Auſtle, May 6, 1758.

THE reaſon of my ſilence ſo long, is from my expectation of hearing from you, in anſwer to my laſt. Since I wrote laſt, I have enjoyed as good a ſtate of health, as I have uſually had in time paſt; for which I unfeignedly praiſe God, who is the giver of this, and every other bleſſing. I have been in ſome danger lately, of falling into the hands of unreaſonable and ſinful men, but the Lord hath reſtrained their power, and kept me

me from their malice. Some of the gentlemen of this country are very much averſe to the way, which they are pleaſed to call hereſy, *in which we worſhip the* God *of our Fathers*. And this is not to be wondered at, for as it was in the beginning, ſo it is now; thoſe who are born after the fleſh, perſecute them who are born after the ſpirit. But when almighty God is diſpoſed to work his great works among ſinners, impotent men, tho' ever ſo combined together, cannot prevent it. The Lord is making known his ſalvation, which is through faith, unto the people: where his name is recorded, tho' by very imperfect ambaſſadors, yet his powerful grace is diſplayed. *Men are enquiring the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, weeping.*

I cannot, once again, help expreſſing my concern for your ſalvation. I make this the ſubject of my prayers; and ſhall it not have a place in my Letters? O my dear Father, do not ſlight, or neglect that which our Lord calls, *the one thing needful*: without the enjoyment of this, we can neither be happy in time, or in eternity. I often think, with wiſhful concern, of your declining age, and diminiſhing ſtrength. Your days on earth, even in the courſe of nature, cannot be many. The weakneſs of your vital powers, the infirmities which attend you, and the inſtances of mortality which ſurround you, call loudly unto you to conſider, and prepare for your latter end. There is no way of facing death with courage, and looking undaunted on the tomb into which we are going; no aſſurance of happineſs in yonder world of ſpirits, but by an aſſured intereſt in the holy life, and propitiatory death, in the glorious reſurrection, and prevalent interceſſion of our adorable Redeemer. As I have often told you in

 times

times past, so I tell you again, that the only way of obtaining salvation through Christ, is by faith. In order to this, earnestly beseech the God of all grace, to give you a true and deep sense of the depravity of your nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and your utter guiltiness in consequence of it. Pray that you may be enabled to renounce your dependance upon your own righteousness. Let the spirit of God convince you of the entire necessity of being born again of the Holy Ghost. In this disposition come unto God, in the name of Christ Jesus, that you may, with Christ, receive pardon of all your sins, peace with God, adoption into his family, sanctifying grace, and everlasting glory. And remember for your encouragement, that you are invited. *Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters*, &c. Call to mind what our Saviour saith: *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Do you labour against sin? Are you burdened with the guilt of it? Christ bids you come! Christ, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, bids you come. What power can prevent your access unto him? Christ, the ocean of love and mercy, bids you come: here all your sins, however many, or mighty, are swallowed up. That he is willing you should come unto him; witness those bitter pains and sufferings which he endured, and that precious blood which he shed for your sake. Nay, you have the infallible testimony from his own mouth: *And him that cometh unto me, I will in no-wise cast out.* Haste, then; O haste unto the Saviour of sinners! Fly, fly unto the Son of God! Destruction pursues you while without; safety is within the city of refuge. *The Lord make you willing in the day of his power.* May your heart become his residence, and may his merit

rit be your paſſport into eternal glory. This is the prayer of

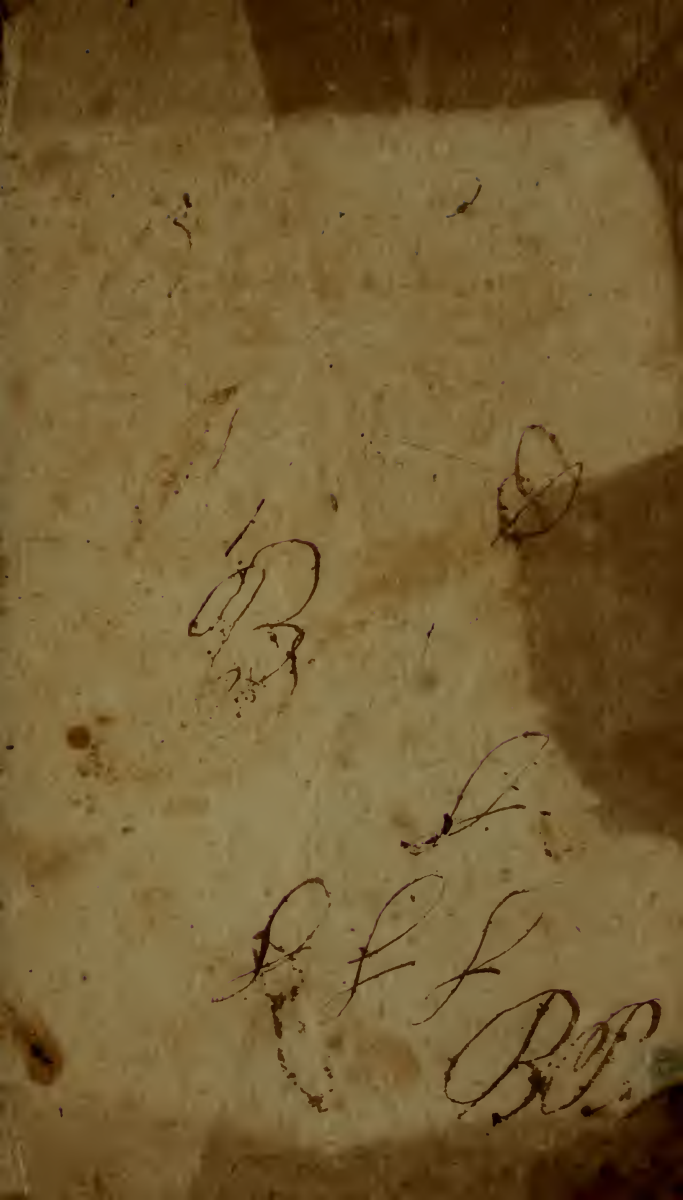
your dutiful Son, &c. &c.

LETTER XCV.

My very dear Father, Dec. 30, 1756.

IT gives me no ſmall pleaſure to hear from any of my friends; but gratitude and duty bind me to love, and value you moſt, from whom I have proceeded. I earneſtly care for your preſent, and eternal welfare. If I knew how to do you good, it ſhould not be undone. But if God has given me a concern for your ſalvation, and a pity to your ſoul, how much more compaſſion hath he towards you, *who ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all: how then will he not with him freely give us all things? Greater love hath no man, than that a man lay down his life for his friends; but God commended his love unto us, that while we were yet ſinners*, yea enemies, *Chriſt died for us.* Fly! then; O fly, my dear father, and fly! O my ſoul! to the precious, precious blood of Jeſus, that he may be made ours by faith. That his righteouſneſs may cover us, his grace enlighten us, his power defend us, his goodneſs comfort us, his mercies embrace us, his ſpirit ſanctify us, and his kingdom entertain us for ever. What ſhould divert our minds from ſo glorious a purſuit? Bleſſed are they who are in the heavenly chaſe. Oh! now make haſte to the Canaan of happineſs. Fear not to find out the much-neglected path; though it lieth through a lonely wilderneſs, the Lord will be a pillar of a cloud by day, and of fire by night. He

He will guide you in the way of uprightneſs. Though the ſea be rough, and the winds rage, we have an unerring Pilot at the helm, who will aſſuredly bring us to the haven where we would be, if we continue in the ſhip. Look! O look beyond the narrow bounds of time, and take a ſurvey of a boundleſs eternity: ſtretch forward to the heavenly plains, where happineſs is clad in everlaſting green; and where, amid the verdant landſcape, ſtreams of endleſs pleaſures roll. My beſt wiſhes for all my relations, my filial duty to you, while

I remain your ever affectionate Son, &c.

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